MAXIMUM ROCKNROLL

ISSUE #237
FEB. 2003
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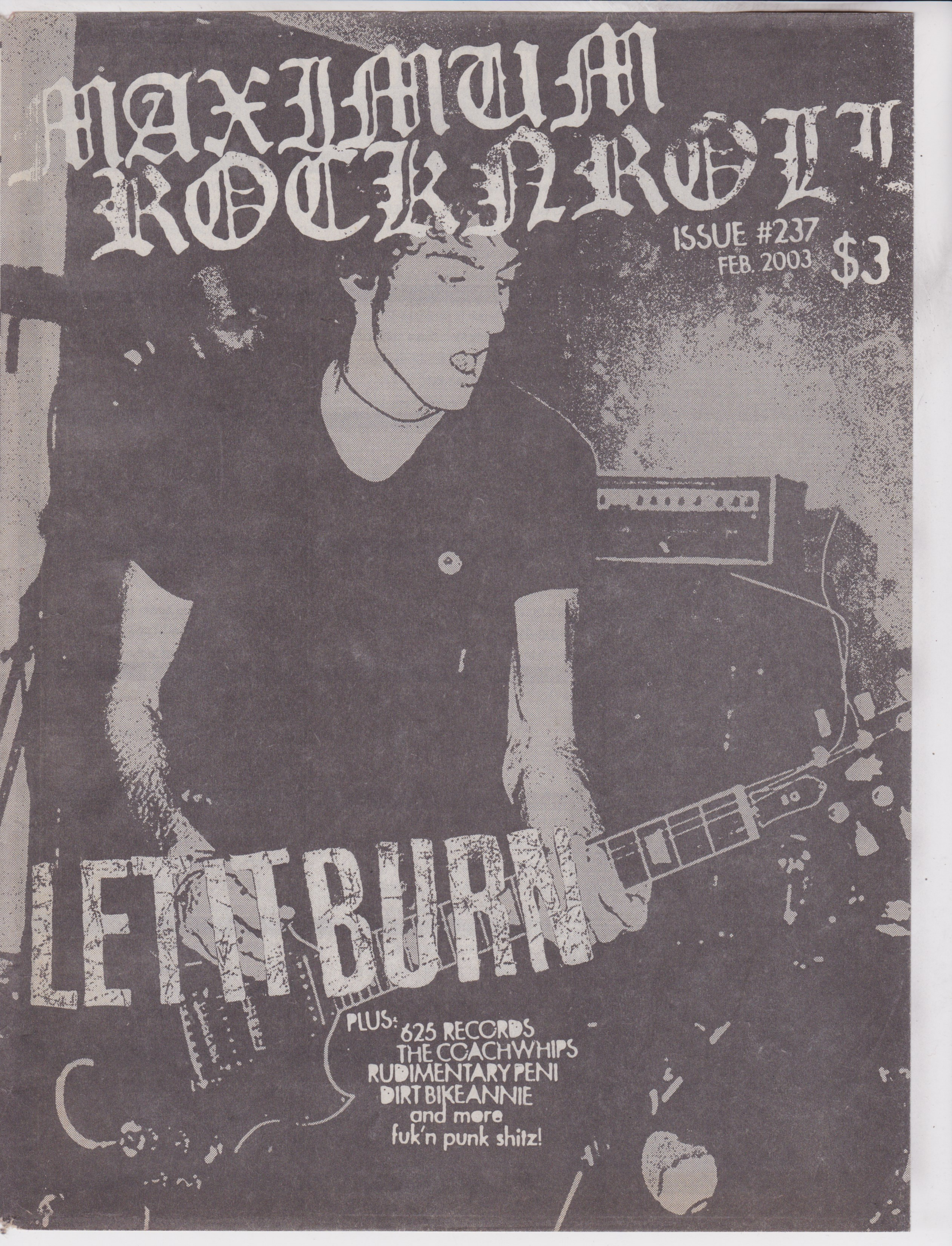

LET IT BURN

PLUS: 625 RECORDS
THE COACHWHIPS
RUDIMENTARY PENI
DIRT BIKE ANNIE
and more
fuk'n punk shitz!

MAXIMUMROCKNROLL TOP 10

For what it's worth (not much), here's some of the MRR crew's current Top 10 (or so...) lists of stuff we review.

TIM BROOKS
BURNPILE/STAKEOUT-split LP
BIG BOYS-Wreck Collection-2xLP
CONFUSE-New God Old God-LP
COLUMBIAN NECKTIES-Social Women-EP
KILLERMETERS-Metric Noise-2xLP
LACK OF KNOWLEDGE-Americanized-CD
TOTAL FURY-Committed to the Core-EP
CAPITALIST CASUALTIES-Disassembly Line-LP
GG ALLIN-Eat My Fuc-LP
LAUKAUS-Mika On Tuola-EP

ROB COONS
OHUZARU-Thrash Is Business-5"
V/A-BCT Presents First Strike 1983-CD
CAPITALIST CASUALTIES-Disassembly Line-LP
DEADFALL-Meathead-EP
SUPERCHARGER-Singles Party-LP
TOTAL FURY-Committed to the Core-EP
APATHETIC YOUTH-Fashion Designers-EP
UNIT PRIDE-Then and Now-CD
GG ALLIN-Eat My Fuc-LP
FUTURES/STOCKHOLM SYNDROME-live

ARWEN CURRY
SHE'S SLEEPING. CAN I TAKE A MESSAGE?

JONATHAN FLOYD
DEADFALL-Meathead-EP
PULSES-LP
BIG BOYS-Wreck Collection-2xLP
NO CHOICE-Dry River Fishing-CD
J CHURCH/PETROGRAD-split EP
THEE MICHELLE GUN ELEPHANT-Rode-CD
AVAIL-live
CONTRAVENĖ-Call to Action-LP
BASTA BASTA-Uzi Rules OK-EP
TOTAL FURY-Committed to the Core-EP

JEFF HEERMANN
PASSED OUT ON THE FLOOR FROM ONE TOO MANY COCKTAILS

KENNY KAOS
STITCHES-Automatic-EP
COLUMBIAN NECKTIES-Social Women-EP
VINDICTIVES-Nuttin' for Christmas-EP
DEMONICS-Ritual on the Beach-LP
SUPERCHARGER-Singles Party-LP
COLUMBIAN NECKTIES-Why Change-LP
LOS ACTIVOS/REAL SWINGERS-split EP
BAD LUCK CHARMS-Rich Girl-EP
(INTL) NOISE CONSPIRACY-Up for Sale-EP
Whoops...only nine! Agh!

CAROLYN KEDDY
TRI-COUNTY THUNDERCATS-tour EP
TRAMPS-CD/V/A-First Strike1983-CD
CLEOPATRAS-both EPs
DAN MELCHIOR-Not the Medway Sound-LP
HENTCHMEN-Three Times Infinity-LP
SUPERCHARGER-Singles Party-LP
TWINKEYZ-Cartoon Land-LP
BIG BOYS-Wreck Collection-2xLP
AGITATED-Go Blue Go Die-EP
THE GROUT-Do It Yourself-EP

DULCINEA LOUDMOUTH
STILL GONE, GONE AWAY

SUBSCRIPTIONS: (postpaid prices)
•US Rate: $3 each. 6 issue sub for $18, **12 issue sub for $30.** In California, send $19.49 for 6 months or $32.55 for 12 months (tax).
•Canada: $4 each (air) or $3 (surface). 6 issue sub for $24 (air) or $18 (surface). (US dollars)
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•Japan, Australia, New Zealand: $9 each (air) or $4.50 (surface). 6 issue sub for $54 (air) or $27 (surface). (US dollars)
•Everywhere else: $8 each (air) or $5.50 (surface). 6 issue sub for $48 (air) or $33 (surface).
Let us know which issue to start with!

BACK ISSUES AVAILABLE: #148, 150-157, 159-163, 166, 169-170, 172-175, 178-181, 184-211, 213-227, 229-236 are as stated above in subscription info. See page after next.

DEADLINES FOR NEXT ISSUE:
Scene Reports: continuously, with photos!
Interviews: continuously, with photos!
Ad Reservations: call to make sure.
Ad Copy In (with payment): by 15th of previous month–NO LATER!!!
Issue out: by 2nd week of following month.

★★ AD RATES & SIZES!! ★★
1/6 page: (2 3/8" x 5") $30
1/3 page long: (2 3/8" x 10") $85
1/3 page square: (5" x 4 7/8") $100
1/2 page: (7 1/4" x 5") $150
Full page (7 1/4" x 10") $400

AD CRITERIA:
We will not accept major label or related ads, or ads for comps that include major label bands. We reserve the right to refuse ads for any reason at any time. Send ads on paper, properly sized.

CLASSIFIEDS: NEW PRICE! $2 for a maximum of 40 words. No racist, sexist or fascist material. Send typed if possible.

COVER: Mike Thorn

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See page 5 for foreign distribution info.

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Phone (415) 923-9814
Fax (415) 923-9617
www.maximumrocknroll.com
maximumrnr@mindspring.com
(use this mainly for comments & letters. Use phone for ads & other business stuff)

MAXIMUMROCKNROLL

TOP 10

Please send us records (2 copies of vinyl, if possible–one for MRR and one for reviewer), or CD-only release. See records section for where to send tapes & CD-R's.

RAY LUJAN

- ACRO-BATS-Kicking-CD
- SOVIETTES/VALENTINES-split LP
- CH3-CD/STOCKYARD STOICS-CD
- THE PITS-Face of England-CD
- STITCHES-Automatic-EP
- SLOPPY SECONDS-Destroyed-CD
- DIRT BIKE ANNIE/POPSTERS-split CD
- J CHURCH/PETROGRAD-split EP
- SUPERCHARGER-LP/EXTRAS CD
- (INTL) NOISE CONSPIRACY-EP

ALLAN MCNAUGHTON

- BIG BOYS-Wreck Collection-2xLP
- MIKE V & THE RATS-EP
- COUNTY Z-EP/DEADFALL-Meathead-EP
- COUNTY Z/IMPRACTICAL COCKPIT-split EP
- J CHURCH/PETROGRAD-split EP
- CONTRAVENE-A Call to Action-LP
- ARROGANTA AGITATORER-EP
- DEAN DIRG-LP/THE INSURGENT-EP
- WHEELS-Year of the Horse-EP
- REAGAN SS-live

WILLIE NELSON

- AND I CAN'T WAIT/BOB BARKER YOUTH-LP
- BURNPILE/STAKEOUT-split LP
- DEAN DIRG-LP
- BLOODSPIT NIGHTS-EP
- BASTA BASTA-Uzi Rules OK-EP
- RUNNAMUCKS-Fuel for the Youth-EP
- DEADFALL-Meathead-EP
- HEARTWORK-Anything Dry-EP
- LAUKAUS-EP/CATHODE-Machine-EP
- HERESIA/GRITOS DE ALERTA-split EP

DONNA POOLE

- BIG BOYS-Wreck Collection-2xLP
- COLUMBIAN NECKTIES-Why Change-LP
- TWINKEYZ-Cartoon Land-LP
- NEW CHRISTS-We Got This-LP
- SUPERCHARGER-Singles Party-LP
- GROUT-Do it Yourself-EP
- COLUMBIAN NECKTIES-Social Women-EP
- LOS ACTIVOS/REAL SWINGERS-split EP
- (INTL) NOISE CONSPIRACY-Up for Sale-EP
- FLESH PACKS-Shortsighted-EP

BRUCE ROEHRS

- BEANS/BBK-split EP/DEADFALL-EP
- GG ALLIN-Gimme Head-EP & Eat My Fuc-LP
- ANTISEEN-Southern Hostility-LP
- ANTISEEN/LIMECELL-split EP
- RUNNAMUCKS-Fuel for the Youth-EP
- ARROGANTA AGITATORER-EP/LAUKAUS-EP
- BARSE-Council Estate-EP
- MIKE V & THE RATS-Viewpoint-EP
- STITCHES-Automatic-EP
- I.A.F./RAHAKKA-split EP

MIKE THORN

- I.A.F./RAHAKKA-split EP/SHAT-live
- LAUKAUS-EP/ALLERGIC TO BULLSHIT-live
- DEADFALL-Meathead-EP/DISMEMBERS-live
- DEAN DIRG-LP/TRAGEDY-live
- BLOOD SPITS NIGHT-EP
- HEARTWORK-EP/BORN/DEAD-live
- INMATES-LP/RACAK/AK-47-split EP
- NO CHOICE-Dry River Fishing-CD
- BASTA BASTA-Uzi Rules OK-EP
- RUNNAMUCKS-Fuel for the Youth-EP

RYAN WELLS

- TWINKEYZ-Cartoon Land-LP
- TRI-COUNTY THUNDERCATS-tour EP
- COUNTY Z-There Goes the Neighborhood-EP
- SUPERCHARGER-Singles Party-LP
- CHEERAKS-Miss Bretzel-EP
- BARSE-Council Estate-EP
- THE GROUT-Do It Yourself-EP
- COUNTY Z/IMPRACTICAL COCKPIT-EP
- INDIKATION-Ain't That Love-45
- APATHETIC YOUTH-Fashion Designers-EP

ZINE TOP TEN

- (Em)Zine #15
- The Irrational Smecht #2
- Razorcake #11
- Savage Amusement #18
- Chin Music #5
- Fracture #22
- Slug & Lettuce #73
- Xerography Debt #9
- Beograde Dobro Jutro #44
- Don't Have A Cow #1

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#148/Sept '95. Soda Jerks, Toe Rag, Thorazine, Sacred Straight, Wizo, Opposition Party, Moody Jackson, Adversives, Opcion Crucial, Rebel, Rebel, Teen Idols, Walking Ruins.

#150/Nov '95. NY Loose, Snap-Her, Sick Boys, Splatterheads, Pipe, Pregnant Man, Final Conflict, Rawness, Stink, Goblins, Smellie Fingers.

#151/Dec '95. Lowdowns, My White Bread Mom, Queen B's, Electric Frankenstein, Turtlehead, Serpico, Trick Babys, In/Humanity, Stains, Varukers, Pist, Terrible Virtue.

#152/Jan '96. Delilah Jacks, Battalion of Saints, Bottom Feeders, Turbonegro, Murder Junkies, Junior, Assfort, Retch Records, Com-Fract, Dead End Kids.

#153/Feb '96. Snort, Hatchetface, Little Ugly Girls, ADZ, Oxymoron, NOTA, Stun Guns, Surfin' Turnips, Gutfiddle, Karen Monster, Dimestore Haloes.

#154/Mar '96. Motards, Subincision, Stisism, Donnas, Stallions, Count Backwards.

#155/Apr '96. "Holy Bible" issue. Hockey Teeth, Turnips Surfin, Pussy Crush, Cro Mags, High Plains Drifters, Slight Slappers, Third Degree, Anti-Flag, Knights of Malta.

#156 pt 1/May '96. Public Toys, Crunch, Peter & The Test Tube Babies, Nails Of Hawaiian, Splash 4, Yawp!, Lifetime, Sickoids.

#156 pt 2/May '96. Australian Special: Beanflipper, Melancholy, Blitz Babiez, Crank, SubRosa, Mindsnare, TMT, H-Block, B-Sides, Fallout, Frenzal Rhomb, Lawnsmell, One Inch Punch, Chickenshit, No Deal.

#157/June '96. Against All Authority, The Criminals, Wardance, Heroines, Brain Brats, Rudiments, Chinese Millionaires, Sons Of Hercules, Your Mother, Yellow Scab.

#159/Aug '96. Smugglers, Brand New Unit, Tone Deaf Pig-Dogs, Round Ear Spocks, David Hayes/Very Small Recs, Man Afraid, Blind Side, Vox Populi, Death Wish Kids, Fun People, Fat Drunk & Stupid.

#160/Sept '96. Automatics, Boycot, Toast, Morning Shakes, Mormons, John Q. Public, Sex Offenders, Ballgagger, Business, Apocalypse Babys, Good Riddance.

#161/Oct '96. Jet Bumpers, Steel Miners, Divisia, Lopo Drido, Red #9, Nothing Cool, Sink, Sires, Newtown Grunts.

#162/Nov '96. Phantom Surfers, Candy Snatchers, the Stain, National Guard, Torches To Rome, Restos Fosiles, Two Bo's Maniacs, Snuka, Redemtion 87, Torture Kitty.

#163/Dec '96. Last Sons of Krypton, Prostitutes, Wig Hat, Boys, Let It Rock, Enemy Soil, Vulcaneers, Half Empty, Zeros, Deadcats, Teen Idles.

#166/Mar '97. Walking Abortions, Hickey, '77 Spreads, Sanity Assassins, Cards In Spokes, Joey Tampon & The Toxic Shocks, Adjective Noun, Suicide King, Lenguas Armadas, Trauma, De Crew.

#169/June '97. Hand Skin, Cluster Bomb Unit, Jihad, Purgen, Speed Queens, Remission, Halflings, The Old Man, Deface.

#170/July '97. Bristle, Mine, Tedio Boys, The 4 Cockroaches, Absconded, Meanwhile. Broken, (Young) Pioneers, Hoodrat.

#172/Sept '97. Withdrawals, Judgement, No Motiv, Oppressed Logic, Truents, Left For Dead, Yellowskin, Weird Lovemakers, Smash Your Face, Flatus, Straight Faced, Klaxon, X-It.

#173/Oct '97. Hot Water Music, Fat Day, Los Tigres Guapos, Les Partisans, Bristols, My 3 Scum, Space Shits, Pessimiser Recs, Reclusives, Nick Qwik.

#174/Nov '97. Stratford Mercenaries, Lickity Split, Bladder, Piss Shivers, Barnhills, In/Humanity, Education theme issue.

#175/Dec '97. One Man Army, Those Unknown, Boiling Man, Piao Chong, Exploding Crustaceans, Last Year's Youth, Heartdrops, Dirty Burds, Dimestore Haloes.

#178/Mar '98. Economics issue. Forgotten Rebels, Dirtys, Josh Collins, American Steel, Letterbombs, Gyogun Rend's, Go-Devils, Room 41, Tone Deaf Pig Dogs, Garage Rats

#179/April '98. Boy Sets Fire, Tres Kids, Idyls, Spat & The Guttersnipes, The Posers, Explosive Kate, Douche Flag.

#180/May '98. Reinforce, Discontent, TV Killers, Slack Action, Eyeliners, Mademoiselle, MK Ultraviolence, Haulin' Ass, 97a, Infiltrators, Jack Saints, Stray Bullets.

#181/June '98. Grapefruit, Druggies, Stiletto Boys, All Bets Off, Bonecrusher, Summerjack, Cell Blck 5, DDI, Normals, Pirate Radio issue.

#184/Sept '98. Absentees, Devoid of Faith, UXA, Ümlaut, Four Letter Word, Streetwalkin' Cheetahs, Ricanstruction, Libertine, Indecision, Snarkout Boys.

#185/Oct '98. Traitors, Wimpy Dicks, Armed & Hammered, Dylan McKays, NME, Tezacrifco, Worm, Roswells, Raxola, Beatnik Termites.

#186/Nov '98. Registrators, August Spies, Marilyn's Vitamins, Chinese Love Beads.

#187/Dec '98. Real Kids, Sawn Off, Cretins, Spider Cunts, Heroines, Third Party, No Class, Skabs.

#188/Jan '99. Stitches, Neighbors, Mansfields, Real Swinger, Marauders, Mark Bruback, Mars Moles, DOA.

#189/Feb '99. Monster X, Peter & the Test Tube Babies, Steam Pig, Maurauders, Yakuza, Dead Beat, Halfways, Hot Rod Honeys, DeRita Sisters.

#190/Mar '99. John Holstrom, Powerhouse, Brezhnev, Slappy, Black Pumpkin, Smartbomb ca, Wanda Chrome, Long Gones, Smogtown, Halfways, Tilt.

#191/April '99. Murder Suicide Pact, Kil Kare, Dudman, Super Hi-Fives, Better Than Elvis DJs, Pet Peeves, Loose Ends, Slingshot Episode.

#192/May '99. Los Crudos, Burning Kitchen, Henry Fiat's Open Sore, Polythene, Kangaroo Recs.

#193/June '99. Munster Recs, DS-13, Safety Pins, Pussycats, Piolines, False Alarm, Darlington, Bad Stain, Bodies, Houseboy, Mullets.

#194/July '99. Deathreat, Last Match, God Hates Computers, Fokkewolf, Flesh Eating Creeps, Aside, Hoppin' Mad, Kid Dynamite, Thee Outcasts.

#195/Aug '99. Moral Crux, RC5, Have Nots, Ill Tempered, Dysentery, Greg Higgins, Revlons, Larry & the Gonowheres.

#196/Sept '99. Hopscotch, Catharsis, Orchid, The Pricks, Grissle, Product X, Reaching Forward, Emerge, Third Degree, "Epicenter Zone '90-'99".

#197/Oct '99. Reducers SF, Lower Class Brats, Reactor 7, TheGodsHateKansas, Futuro Incierto, Showcase Showdown, Waifle, Flat Earth Recs.

#198/Nov '99. Hail Mary, Pressure Point, Bump 'N Uglies, The Victims, A//Political, Outlast

#199/Dec '99. Locust, Ratos de Porao, USV, Razlog Za, G-3, Swarm, WHN?, Mt. St. Helens, Black Cat Music, Enemy Soil.

#200/Jan '00. American Steel, Curse, Gee Vaucher, Hers Never Existed, Cometbus, Active distro, Toxic Narcotic, MRR #100-200.

#201/Feb '00. Beerzone, Towards An End, Daybreak, "Best Punk Singles of the '90s," the WTO riots in Seattle.

#202/March '00. KTMWQ, Real Estate Fraud, Strike Out, Broken Rekids, the Haggard, GC5, Gore Gore Girls, the Catheters.

#203/April '00. Spazz, Slang, *Slug & Lettuce* zine, *Suburban Voice* zine, As We Once Were, Red Angel Dragnet, Four Letter Words, Slampt Records, the Wednesdays, the Fuses.

#204/May '00. Cocksparrer, Talk Is Poison, Red Scare, Put Downs, Out Cold, Geraldine, Michael Knight, CBGaV, Pillage People.

#205/June '00. Punks With Kids special. Skudz, 50 Million, Legion, Wilbur Cobb, Coalition.

#206/July '00. Drunk, ESL, Ambition Mission, Lord High Fixers, Cripple Bastards, Dig Dug, Federation X, Amulet, Valentine Killers.

#207/Aug '00. Harum Scarum, Raw Power, Unseen, Pekinska Patka, Hudson Falcons, Dementia 13, Confine, Allergic to Whores.

#208/Sept '00. Le Shok, the Commies, the Chemo Kids, Day of Mourning, Affront, Diaspora, Whippersnapper, Hopeless/Sub City , Prank, Countdown to Oblivion

#209/Oct '00. Loose Lips, Godstomper, Peace of Mind, FYP, I Farm, Annalise, Cattle Decapitation, Riot/Clone.

#210/Nov '00. J Church, Profane Existence, Pezz, Pre-Teens, Templars, This Machine Kills, Subtonix, OB.

#211/Dec '00. Fly & Seth Tobocman, Anti/Dogmatikss, Hissyfits, Aus Rotten, Media Blitz, Rocks, Hospital Food, Falsies, White Stripes, 9 Shocks Terror, Tijuana Bibles.

#213/Feb '01. Fun People, Onward to Mayhem, Ugly Pop, Midnight Evils, Atrocious Madness, Bread & Water, Josh Peach, Zodiac Killers.

#214/Mar '01. Crispus Attucks, Fetish, Lifes Halt, Mr. Roboto, Dream Dates, Satan McNugget, Havoc, Briefs.

#215/April '01. No Means No, Vitamin X, Injections, Y, Dils, Last In Line, Don Austin, Deranged Records

#216/May '01. Propagandhi, Angelic Upstarts, Discordance Axis, Ruination, Photographer: Chris Boarts, Strap-Ons, Lynnards Innards

#217/June '01. Joey Ramone R.I.P., Tear It Up, Skitsystem, The Pattern, CrimethInc., Esperanza, The Chicago Blackout, Photographer: Ace

#218/July '01. Guyana Punchline, Les Sexareenos, The Devil Is Electric, Red Monkey, White Collar Crime, Forca Macabra, The Ataris, Suicide, The Mob

#219/Aug '01. "Fix It!" cycling article, Crucial Unit, Lost Sounds, Lombardies, Flowers in the Dustbin pt. 1, Casualties, Resinators, *P.U.N.K.*, Slaughter & the Dogs, Anti-Flag, Dontcares, S'Bitch.

#220/Sep '01. Latin American Issue. Aubuso Sonoro, Anti-Todo, Fuerza X, Apatia No, Manganzoids, Demencia, Sick Terror, Tocatta y Bulla, NTN, Argies, Reconcile, Anti-Korpus, Ruido De Odio, Los Pepiniyos, Rebelion Disidente, Brazil Scum , Kim Bae Photo Essay.

#221/Oct '01. Tales from the G8 Summit, Reflections, Soophie Nun Squad, Totalitär, True North, Wontons, Sin Dios, Bottles & Skulls, Scarred For Life, Flowers in the Dustbin pt. 2, Remains of the Day, Ritchie Whites, B'67.

#222/Nov '01. Dios Hastio, Tragedy, Four Letter Word, *Salad Days* author Charles Romalotti, Very Metal, Maurice's Little Bastards, the Rotters, MDC Brazilian tour diary, the Cravats, JR Ewing, Dutch scene report, extended news section, "Globalization Rhetoric & Reality,"

#223/Dec '01. "US Policy in the Middle East," "Revisiting 1948," Manifesto Jukebox, Good Riddance, Pokers, Viimenen Kolonna, Bluebloods, Vitamin X tour diary, Flakes, Pg. 99, the Mob, 7 Days of Samsara.

#224/Jan '02. "Legislation Since Sept. 11," Rendencion 9.11, Metro Youth, Severed Head of State, Piranhas, Paraf, Backstabbers, Inc, An Albatross, Citizen Fish Tour, SPAM Records, the Virus, Action Time.

#225/Feb '02. Lengua Armada, Breaker Breaker, 3 Yrs. Down, Scrotum Grinder, Turun Tauti, Flux Of Pink Indians, Holding On, Pauki, 86'd, See You In Hell, Red Light Sting, Nazis From Mars, Scare Tactic.

#226/Mar '02. Queer punk special issue. Vaseline, Quails, Skinjobs, Italian queer punk report, Vaginal Davis, Feelings on a Grid, Sissies, Scott Free, Dumba, Columns.

#227/Apr '02. Bellrays, Rhinos, Wasted, Kristofer Pasanen, Business, Assert, DS 13 tour report, Life Set Struggle, Iowaska, Zounds.

#229/June '02. Countdown To Putsch, The Awakening, Dave Hill Distribution, Holier Than Thou, Kill Devil Hills, Sound Of Failure, E.T.A., Nubs, Les Baton Rouge, New Disorder Records, Career Suicide, Swellbellys, The Sinyx.

#230/July '02. Bitchin', Redencion 911, Phantom Limbs, Secretions, Holy Molar, Sharp Knife, Mighty John Waynes, A Global Threat, Groovie Ghoulies, Reproach, Annie Anxiety.

#231/Aug '02. Epoxies, Puppy Vs. Dyslexia, Koro, Blocko, Amdi Petersen's Armé, Piss & Vinegar Zine, Schizophrenic Records, Toys That Kill, Give Us Barabbas, Dirt.

#232/Sept '02. "No Future" article, Lost, Fartz, Sell Outs, Razors Edge, Stakeout, Dillinger Four, All or Nothing HC, Fleshies, Bridge Nine Records, Akashic Books, Liberty.

#233/Oct. '02. "All Ages" article, Scholastic Deth, Runnamucks, Sinners & Saints, Panic, Gasolheads, Jewws, Futures, Michael Landon's Commandos, Storm the Tower, Against Me!, Balance of Terror, Class Assassins, Spazm 151.

#234/Oct. '02. Snobs, What Happens Next? Brazilian tour, The Oath, Radio 4, Feederz, Charm City Suicides, Selfish, Riot 99, End On End, Peawees, Born/Dead

#235/Nov. '02. Anti-war Special Issue. Anti-war guest columns. Anti-war scene reports. Articles: "Reading for Democracy," "War on Iraq?" "Unfinished American Revolution," Resource Guide, "US Involvement in Iraq,""Axis of Empire." Long Island DIY Scene, What Happens Next? Brazilian tour part 2, Smalltown, Kylesa, Crash & Burn.

#236/Dec. '02. Mr. California & State Police, Iron Lung, Riff Randells, Chainsaw, Artcore Fanzine, Latterman, Travis Cut, Phenomenauts, Pretty Little Flower, X-Cretas.

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IMPORTANT CRAP!
NEW AD RATES!

Starting issue with #234 (Nov. 2002), MRR's ad rates have increased for the first time in three years. Please note that since a good number of you have asked for them, we will be allowing up to four full-page ads on a first-come first-served basis. Thanks again for your continued support...

1/6th page (2 3/8" x 5") $30
1/3 page long (2 3/8" x 10") $85
1/3 page square (4 7/8" x 5") $100
1/2 page (7 1/4" x 5") $150
Full page (7 1/4" x 10") $400

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Arwen, Mike, & Clara

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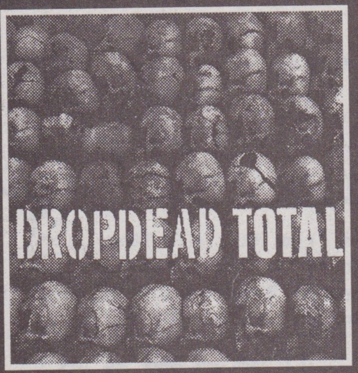

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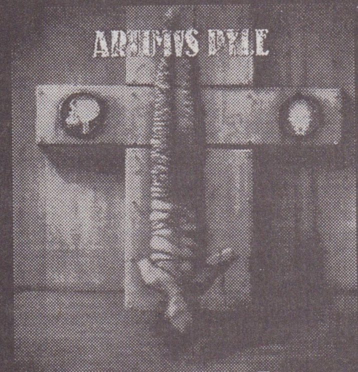

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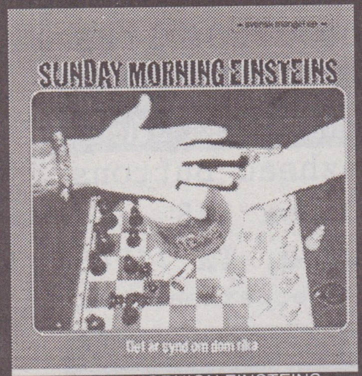

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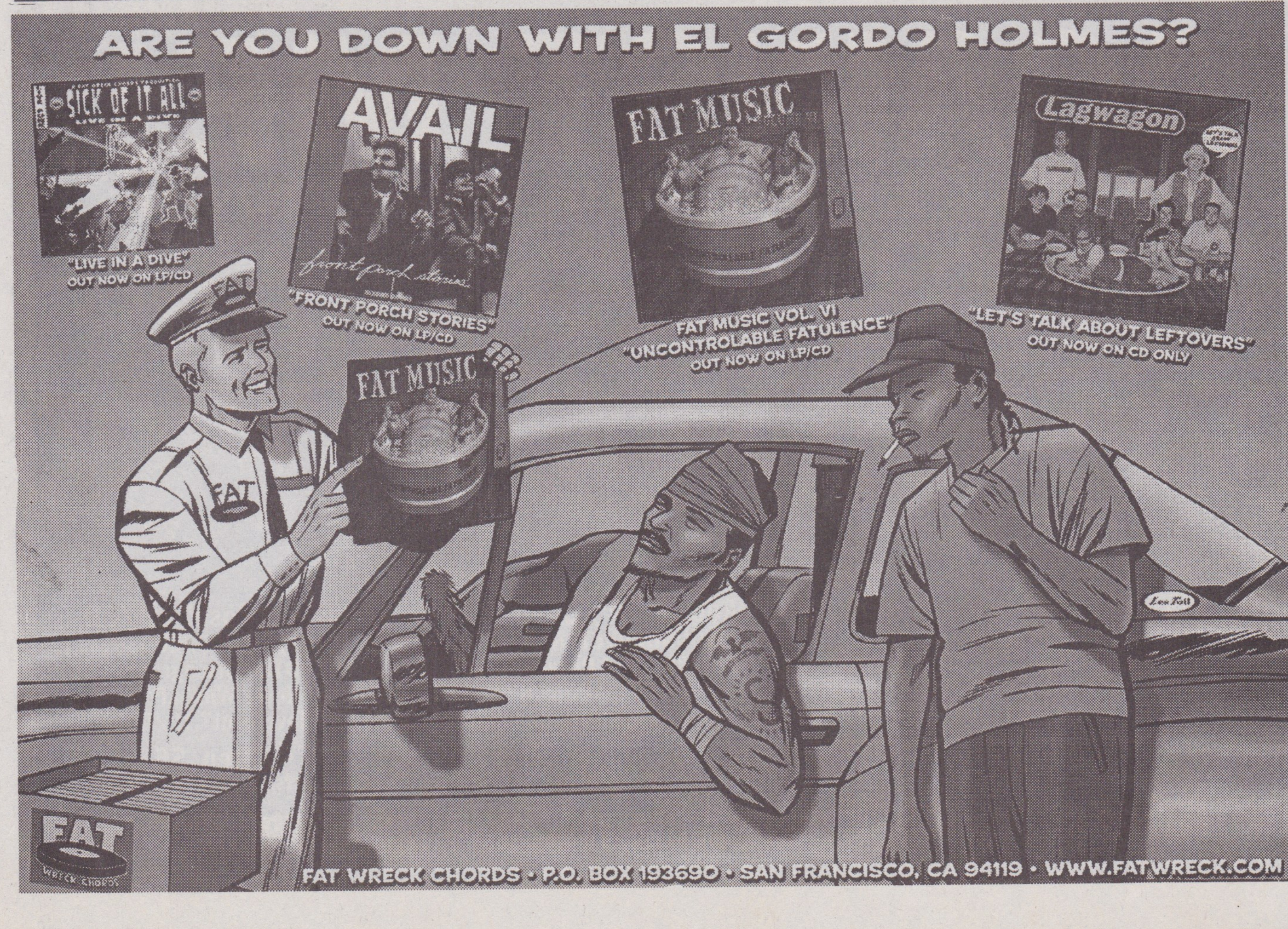


LETTERS

Send letters to MRR, PO Box 460760, San Francisco, CA 94146-0760, or to maximumrnr@mindspring.com. No response guaranteed.

Hey,

Just wanted to say how much *MRR* kicks ass. There's not much of a punk scene where I live on Long Island; sure there are shows, but if you don't have a car or friends with one (and can't drive anyway cuz you're 15) they might as well not exist. Before I started reading *MRR*, I had no idea there was such a large, worldwide underground punk scene, or so many punk labels besides Epitaph and Fat Wreck (who actually aren't that punk anyway). Despite living so close to NYC, my friends and I still get shit for being punk, especially since we're in the "advanced" classes and the other kids there consider punk to be dumb. They think not liking MTV or corporations like McDonald's or Nike is one of the weirdest things they've ever heard of. When I go outside with my mohawk spiked up people still look at me funny, and I've even seen people in their cars turn their heads to look at it. In some ways it's harder to be punk and a girl—I'm sure those football players wouldn't say shit to me if I was a tall scary-looking dude.

Anyway, knowing that there are hardcore punks out there who are so dedicated to it, who put on anti-war rallies and run distros and tour the fucking country with bands, really helps me ignore whatever people say and motivates me to do more than just read about what other kids are doing, and maybe start my own band or whatever. And obviously *MRR* has helped me find a lot of awesome bands. By the way, it was cool to see a few references to existential philosophy and Nietzsche in the last issue (#236) because I'm into that and I think it has some punk ideas and attitudes. Guess that's it.

—Anna
SushiGish@cs.com

Dear *MRR*,

This year has been an amazing time in proving beyond any doubt that punk rock is an international phenomenon. There have been countless bands engaging in intercontinental tours. To name a few, we've had Selfish and Manifesto Jukebox from Finland, Amdi Petersens Armé from Denmark, Vitamin X from Holland, ETA from Sweden, the Futures, Total Fury, and the Braineaters from Japan, the Horror from the UK—shit, even the almighty Stockholm Syndrome from, ironically enough, Mälmo, Sweden all came over to the USA. Plenty more went from the USA abroad and, of course, plenty of non-US bands toured in far-off places. I'm constantly amazed at this; kids from one country can help out their foreign friends set up tours in basements and DIY venues and do well enough that everyone has a great time without losing their asses. If that ain't proof of the magic of our scene, than nothing is. I've been lucky enough to be marginally involved in a few such tours and I could probably go on forever about this stuff, but I'll stick to the good, the bad, and the ugly.

The good: There are so many fucking amazing people here who believe in the scene, who open their homes up to strangers and give them a place to stay and something to eat. I think Americans are starting to catch up with people in Europe, where it's always been the case that people doing the shows help feed and house touring bands. I suppose we live in a skeptical society where people may be hesitant to let a bunch of strangers crash in their homes or waste their cash to feed them, but the simple gestures can make the difference between a great tour and a horrible month. It means a lot to roll into town after hours of driving and have people introduce themselves and point to a hot bowl of food and tell you that you've got a place to stay. For like $10 (that you can take out of the door money) you can make enough food to feed a few bands and still have some leftovers for your lunch. Our scene is based on a network of friends that transcends geography and there's a definite trust factor involved. Giving bands a place to stay might challenge your conditioning, but you'll probably end up having a good time and possibly make some future long-term friends.

Also, it's great to see that people are still making fliers, and cool ones at that. It seems some folks are becoming too reliant on the internet and don't bother promoting their gigs the good old fashioned way (or at all). Fliers rule, OK? It's punk rock art, it's a documentation of our efforts, and it gets kids to the show. And if kids are at the shows, then bands can get enough money to get to the next gig and hopefully, give them some cash for expenses on the road and (with overseas bands) pay for their plane tickets.

The bad: Recently the Horror from the UK came over and did an East Coast tour that unfortunately was not without incident. Their originally scheduled New Jersey gig was canceled after some thugs thought it was necessary to make threats to the club and promoter of the show because they had problems with the a few of the opening bands. This crybaby bonehead throwback to the days that almost killed punk rock cost an overseas band a gig that would have been great for them. The details of the rivalry between the band and the kids who ruined the show is insignificant to what I'm saying (and from what I can tell, both are in the wrong). It scares me that people who do shows are getting physically threatened. It looks like a fuckin' repeat of what happened in '84-'85, where people's brains went out the window and they started solving problems with their fists. Of course, this can only lead to the weakening of the scene—people not putting on or going to shows because they fear their health will be jeopardized.

The ugly: Well, Mike Thorn, of course.

I hope the international exchange of bands continues next year with as much intensity as it did this year. Particularly, Jed Whitey, Henry Fiats Open Sore, and Skitkids better come to the USA.

Listen to Die Kreuzen,
Dave Hyde
26 Lacona Dr
Patterson, New York 12563
fightordie@hotmail.com

Dear *MRR*,

I picked up the Nov issue of *Maximum* (#234), the first time in years I've read *MRR*. I'm trying to get back involved with the punk scene after years of traveling the world, holding down a job/family (I am 43 years old). What's

happened to all the scene reports? That was always my fave thing about *MRR*, that you could read about punk scenes from Iceland to New Zealand! From Peru to Finland! You get the picture. We have a pretty healthy scene here in Liverpool, England, with some great bands such as; State Terror, Noizebleed, Flamingo 50, Kling Klang, acid Edge, Vamos, The Icemen, Heavy Sausage, The Inadequates, Zomina & the Skeletones, Zen Baseballbat, and some more I don't remember the names of right now! I am working ona Liverpool scene report for a future issue of *MRR*.

And only one page of classifieds. Is that 'cause everyone has a computer now? *[yes. -ed.]* Well, I don't have one. And I know loads of punks don't have them. How punk are computers anyway?! Come on kids, let's see more classified ads in *MRR*! That's it for now...I'm not dissing *MRR*. It's still very vital to the global punk network. I enjoy reading the columns. If anyone out there is visiting Liverpool, check out Hairy Records which has the best selection of punk vinyl, old and new, with a massive and cheap secondhand section! Also the Egg Cafe, a cool punk hang out during the day. Adios, punk amigos!

—Danny, Liverpool, England

MRR,

Hey, I'm up in Anchorage, Alaska...I've been throwing all ages shows up here for over two years now...I'm even in a band and would love to shamlessly promote...there are a few of my friends' bands I would love to rant and rave about, some cool shit going on up here I would like to share with the rest of the world. Because we are in Alaska it is hard for our band, and our friends' bands to get out and share with the rest of the states what we are doing.

A lot of people in bands up here not being of punk or HC roots feel that their only option is to basically have pipe dreams of being signed to a major label. Lets face it...it is Alaska—that is not going to happen, unless you are 36 Crazy Fists, but they play what sounds to me like Korn covers with the goat boy from *Saturday Night Live* singing for them. They moved to Portland. I say this with full understanding of what people may say about the band I'm in. On the other hand there are the badasses in punk rock hardcore bands, or true garage rock bands that bail out to Portland with good sincere intentions to be succesful in their passion for the music. I wish they felt they never had to leave to succeed. It isn't easy up here, the same as a lot of other li'l podunk half-ass cities in the states...but we live in the middle of nowhere. Those of us who like Anchorage and feel strongly about our endeavors wish to make the best of it. Those of us who are up here would like to play a part in the bigger picture of the punk rock and hardcore. Maybe you guys at *MRR*, or whoever else is down can give us some pointers. We do know what is going on down there. Do any of you want to know what is going up here? take warning!

—Andrew Dirt Cult.
dirtycultbrains@yahoo.com

Andrew, the rest of Anchorage, and everyone else too—
Yes! We do want to know what is going on out there! Please, please, send in scene reports!
—Anandi

Hello Bruce,

You nazi scum. In the review of the Headhunters record, you mentioned "the legendary Swedish skinhead band Ultima Thule." Everyone in Sweden knows that UT was nazis—in fact, that has been brought out through the mainstream media. Or maybe they're not nazis, maybe just "extreme patriots." I think they wrote songs about like they're Vikings that are fighting and killing...

However, UT is the *main* reason in Sweden that skinheads and "white power" are common, they're *to blame* for that! That's why they're legendary!!! If *MRR* will review nazi records, they should at least mention that they are nazi records, and I think it's really weird you mentioned Ultima Thule without mention of their "white power" thing. In Sweden we take that for granted, but I believe they're not well known for that outside Scandinavia. At the same time as the Headhunters record,there was a review of a Perkele record—really weird, I didn't know they were patriots (nazis), so thanks for letting me know that (well no thanks, Bruce), but Ultima Thule was a lot more extreme than Perkele is in their thought, so why not mention anything of Ultima's thing?

You must have nervous breakdowns sometimes because I don't know why you started to listen to "viking-rock." Fuck you and your nazi sympathy!!

Martin Hellberg
soja@hotbrev.com

Dear *Maximum RocknRoll*,

I like your magazine very much. Even though I don't understand every word, it gives me a good impression and overlook about what's happening in the punk rock world. And I've got the impression that most of your writers are intelligent, more leftist writers. But something always makes me angry. There are often bands, fanzines, and labels reviewed that belong to right wing parties and fascist supporters. And these guys get good reviews, which maybe makes other people from all over the world think they are good guys to get in contact with.

I know that Dim Records and Blind Beggar are stuck very much into white power structures. They say they are not interested in politics, but they do this because they want to sell the right wing stuff from their mailorders to low-minded streetpunkers and skinheads. If Bruce gives them good reviews, this is like a signal to the punk rock world that these guys and what they sell is OK. But they aren't. The fanzine *Raumschiff Wucherprise* and the Scumfuck label acts nearly in the same way acts. The owner, Wolfgang Schmidt, is no right-wing activist, but he's close friend and business-partner to both labels. And they are all active in trying to make punk accept right-wing ideas. I know that you American guys have the right to free speech and that you don't forbid those people to have a public. But I think the people should know what's behind the friendly masks of these guys. If you would like to get contacts in Austria, Switzerland, and Germany, there are many good ways, but don't support the wrong ways.

Take Care,
Karin Mayr
Spatzele@gmx.at

Hello there!

I'm writing again to say that Dim Records is still a nazi label out of Germany. Again I found a review of one of their releases in the latest *MRR*. Also, Scumfuck isn´t a nazi label, but he´s selling right-wing stuff and is working together with Dim Records. Please do not review any of their stuff, please!

Micha
farewellrec@plastic-bomb.de

I want to thank everyone for writing in and letting us know about Ultima Thule, Dim, Blind Begger, and other related facist/right-wing labels. To be honest, neither Arwen nor myself, knew much about these bands or their politics and your writing in to let us know about them is much appreciated. We were played the fool, and I thank people for calling us on our shit. It's a scary thing to me to have the realization that there still is a very real and strong right-wing/nazi skinhead scene that is well connected and organized around the world—one which thrives

on people's ignorance as to their real intentions, through their veil of "nationalism" and just having "pride." While traditionally we have reviewed such releases in order to keep the punks informed and aware about these scumbags, MRR does not and will never knowingly support such labels or bands. At the same time, we can't and don't know everything about every band, and we rely on punks around the globe to keep us informed as to what goes on. So once again, I apologize for our mistakes, and thank you for writing. Nationalism leads to fascism, in my book.
Michael Thorn

MRR,
I made the mistake of calling Reagan SS nazis because my friend said their EP was a tribute to Skrewdriver. Once I got to know them I realized my comments were wrong and totally unjustified. I was fucking stupid for saying that. I'm embarassed about it, but I just want to say I'm sorry.
Kyle Nonneman
nothingisttrue@hotmail.com

Dear *MRR*,
I am tired of being insulted by your reviewers...namely Bruce Roehrs. Why does he hate me so much? For example, in issue #233 I was reading Bruce's review of The 86ers' *Send the 86ers* EP. In this review Bruce said, "The 86ers play some rough and tumble punk rock for you fucks"! Why am I a fuck?! Bruce and I have never even met! I'm sorry for whatever I did to make you hate me, Bruce. We should all try to live in peace, harmony and togetherness in this post Sept. 11 world. Very sincerely and sensitively,
Phil Electric Grandmother
Phil1247@aol.com

hey *MRR*,
I just got the last issue and it kicks ass. I've been reading it for years and it has helped me with good underground music. I've been to a lot of shows over the years and because of *MRR* I knew where to go. See, I am 30 years old and I used to travel a lot mostly the West Coast. Growing old as a punk rocker is odd; I mean, I still skate and love hardcore but I feel out of place with most people my own age; but I also feel out of place with teens. I am putting a band together with a 20-year-old and a 14-year-old and an 18-year-old too. Well, I still love punk—see what comes of my band.
Ken
trudykids@yahoo.com

Hello *MRR*,
Hello. this is David from the you-hated-us-at-Gilman-Street-in-'91 band God Bullies. Been a long time since I'd actually read a copy—I've been away from music for quite a while now, pretty much burnt out on the quote/unquote "scene." Your antiwar issue was fantastic. Reminds me of why I started reading *MRR* way back in '83-'84. Wish I still had those copies now.

Reason I'm writing is this: Bush is about to plunge us into another fucking war, and in typical American ostrich fashion, virtually no one is paying attention. Well, along with many of you, I'm trying to do something about it. At least trying to make the opposition to Fuhrer Bush's genocidal policies a bit more visible. To that end, I've launched a website, www.fuckthewar.com. The purposes are twofold. First, to provide a clearinghouse for antiwar-related links, info, essays, and so on (contributions of material here greatly appreciated). Second, to offer "@fuckthewar.com" email addresses to whoever wants one. Basically, I'm doing my best to provide these for free, particularly to the unemployed, punks, students, and senior citizens.

So if anybody wants one, visit the site and follow the instructions for signing up. I am accepting donations for the site from those who can afford it—I'm not Yahoo, so I can't afford to pay indefinitely for everybody's email access for free (I have $168 bucks right now) but I pretty much figure that most *MRR* readers, who most deserve stuff for free, are the least likely to afford it. So *MRR* people, please mention that you are coming from *MRR*. The idea is that with a few thousand people sending around emails with "@fuckthewar.com" tacked on, it'll make it easier to spot friends of the antiwar effort, for starters; secondly, it will invariably make us more visible to the korporate kontrolled media; thirdly, it provides a simple, effective way of stating your own position on the issue.

So I urge anyone who feels as I do that Bush's genocide campaign in Iraq is bullshit to sign up. Secondly, some of you may have heard of Fred Phelps, the guy who picketed at Matthew Shepard's funeral and who runs the godhatesfags.com website. Well, the fuckbag is coming here to protest in Michigan this coming week, and in response we've prepared a welcoming site for him. If you're against homophobia or if the pig Phelps is coming to your town, you might want to check it out at www.godhatesphelps.org.
Thanks again for *MRR*...
best,
David Livingstone
david@orwellmedia.com

Hi *MRR*,
This is David from the Israeli band Nikmat Olalim. Some people from abroad who took interest in our band following the article about Israel in the last issue have been wondering why there is no contact address or anything. So, our address is:
Tal Levi
19 Dov Hoz st., apt. 10
Kfar Saba 44356
Israel
tal_olalim@hotmail.com

And if anyone's interested in any of the other bands or projects or anything about Israel, we'll be glad to hook you up.
Cheers!
David

Hi there everyone,
Jonas from Våning 5 here. This letter is an apology to everyone who has been waiting ages for answers from us, but didn't get any. I must start to say that we haven't forgot about anyone, and we are really, really happy to be in contact with all you cool people from all around. We've just been into a period without much activity from our side. Everyone needs that now and then, but it's bad from our side that we haven't at least answered your emails to tell you that. We are really sorry for this! I will get back with personal answers to all of you, but here I'll send you the news for the moment.

OK... Yesterday we practiced for the first time in two months. We decided that we'll go into the studio and record songs for the 7" at Alerta Anti-Fascista Records and our split 7" with Down The Line (the layout for the records is not ready yet) the 4-5th of December. Hopefully we'll be ready after these two days. Afterwards, we don't know what we'll do. We don't know if there will be any more tours or songs at all, since not everyone is sure they want to continue. I personally really hope we'll keep playing for a long while! We'll get back with more info about this later... We now have our split live tape with Kobayashi (from Lübeck 16/8 2002) released. Please just send over your address and we'll send you a copy!

About trades with Falafel Media...there have been a lot of delays with artwork and shit like that, but I'll get the Offensive Human Machine 7" (great Swedish crust) back any day. We have a release party for it in Helsingborg the 7th of December. I of course also have the Våning 5 / Kobayashi tape to trade with.

Please write back to me with offers about trades. I would really love to trade!!
...But it's better to use my personal email

address falafelmedia@hotmail.com for that. If you are doing a Scandinavia Tour and want to play in our town, Helsingborg, please use this address folkligkultur@hotmail.com. I also promise we'll have a homepage out before our new releases are out! ...For everyone who is waiting for an interview, the answer is sorry once again. We are crap, and if I was you I would hate us—but we'll soon be ready! OK...I guess that's all for now. We are really sorry for everything, hope you'll keep on co-operating with us. Take care and stay fucking angry DIY-punk!

—Jonas and Våning 5

MRR,

We are a British punk rock band who came close to signing with a label from the UK called Three Days Dead Records. The guy who "runs" this scam says all sorts of things about touring and making records, but it's all a lie. He had a legendary Canadian band on the roster so of course we thought he meant business, but no, it was all a lie. (Of course, they were super messed about with as well, no album releases etc.) Why, we cant tell, but this guy has fled the UK punk scene under a cloud of hatred and shame owing absolutely thousands of pounds etc., etc.

One band even had to pay back their "advance" to get out of their "contract" as well as signing a gag order to stop them bad mouthing his "label" because *nothing* had been done after months of waiting and arguing. I could go on for hours with horror stories of this guy. The words lawyers, debt collectors, and thousands were mentioned to me.

He now resides in San Diego, his name is Marc Webster, his "label" is called Three Days Dead Records. If you know of anyone who may be involved with him, good or otherwise, tell them to be very careful or they will come off about five thousand dollars worse off. The British punk scene has exposed him, now he thinks he can do the same in the US. Please let the people who read *MRR* see this information, as this guy needs to be stopped. Forward this to as many people who you might be able to.

Thanks again.

Anonymous ('cause he threatened to sue)

MRR,

Hey, I hate to use your letter section as a place to talk shit about somebody, but here in Las Vegas we have an asshole named Larry B. who runs a record disto called Panic Inc. Well first I'll tell you, it's not like this dude ripped me off for a million dollars, he only fucked me over for one record, but it still pisses me off, so I'm gonna talk shit!

First of all, I ordered a Distgruntle record from this asshole in early May. Then about a month went by and no record, so I emailed him, and no response, so about once a month I'd email this guy. Then right around the end of September, Larry B. emailed me and said, boo-hoo, I moved, I'm sorry, I'll send you some records in the mail. Well, a month went by, and nothing. So I emailed Larry twice so far since he emailed me and I have yet to get a response. Well I have talked to some of Larry's friends and they have all told me the same thing, that Larry is a flake, but the thing is I didn't want to resort to crying to *Maximum Rock 'n Roll*. The fact that this dickhead is too much of a coward to contact me is the reason I must write a letter to you, because I know he will read it or somebody will tell him about it! Well Larry, I don't want your fucking record anymore, I would like to punch you in the dick and make it come out of your ass, you lazy fuck! By the way, sorry Maxi Rocker for using you, I hope you don't feel dirty. By the way, 1,000 bummers about Matty Luv. The few times I met him he was very fucking cool!

Karl Bakla

Dear *MRR*,

Congratulations on yet another great issue. It just never stops...

This letter is in response to James Duane's letter about CAL Press ripping him off. I don't work with, nor know anyone at CAL. However, after reading the letter I thought I should respond. He mentions sending letters to AAL Press. Is it possible that the address was a typo or he just made an honest mistake in writing it out? If he got the AAL Press wrong, what else might have been mistaken? That said—I've ordered from CAL a bunch of times with absolutely no problem. I also doubt that Jason McGuinn and everyone involved there would intentionally rip off prisoners.

That aside, I'd also like to request that *MRR* be changed to one big Shane White review with a couple of paragraphs of *MRR*. That'd be fucking boss...

Dustin Arson
6 Circle Dr
Mount Kisco NY
10549 3604
Dreadedcrustpunk@aol.com

Hello Melissa Klein,

I really enjoyed reading your review of my book (*Screaming at a Wall*) in *Maximumrocknroll* #235, and so I thought I'd respond to your (very fair) criticisms.

The introductory remarks I made regarding sex industry workers were a capsulization of discussions I've had with reporters, who tend to relish that analogy. When read in such a passing way, it does gloss over the sorrows of prostitutes and others in the business. I must confess that I've gone over the thought so many times that I assumed the reader knew what I didn't include. I also wrote it knowing that it was likely to be quoted, and otherwise might have left it out. But I'm very familiar with the lives of sex industry workers, having known many as friends, as fellow activists, as workers seeking union-related advice, and occasionally as a lover (not to be confused with the occupation). The comparison, for me, is based in the way neither a lab rat nor a sex worker has any pretty illusions about their work.

I coined the term "brain sluts," and I am generally blunt. Again, it would read as a more understanding item if read within a longer discussion. I happen not to use any recreational drugs or alcohol, but I do not condemn people who choose to do so. I've said many times that firstly, people who get high in their regular lives are better suited for psych experiments, and secondly, that human psychiatric experiments are badly under-regulated and are far more risky than they are made to seem. In terms of safety, a drug trial for a heart drug is like a walk in the park, but one for an antidepressant is like the Wild West. The whole idea of informed consent is like a word-game for many leading psychiatrists. Also, as I described elsewhere in the book (article p.10), a very close friend had a serious psychiatric episode in connection to a Paxil experiment. He was directly on my mind as I wrote the story you quoted. I haven't seen the guy in years, but what happened to him was a terrible pity.

Thanks so much for your kind words about the book. It's not every day that I hear back from such a discerning reader. I hope that this note finds you well.

Robert Helms
Philadelphia PA

Dear *MRR*,

Do you think if I could find a way to get Mykel Board laid, that we could all do without his column for a month?

sincerely, Neil Shock

MRR,
What exactly does it mean to be a "punk"? Do you have to have that DIY inbred slogan tattooed to our brains with a homemade tattoo gun? Do you have to smell really bad and not wear clean clothing and be "homeless" even though you have the choice of being in the confines of a comfy home? Do you have to have a mere high school education and "hang out" only with other punks who seem to have punk ideals and practice bad political ways? Would it be too far out of the confines of punk rock hood to listen to rap music and enjoy it? Is it really necessary to shop at Hot Topic for your latest punk fashions? Do you have to humiliate yourself, begging for spare change?

I am counter-cultured, and I have never practiced any of these really ignorant punk rock traditions. Being a traditional "punk rocker" and saying that you are different from any other cliche is just another ridiculous moot point. People who claim to be "punk" are no better than people who are preps, jocks, nerds, or gangsters. Doing the same things as trying to adapt to the lifestyles and dressing the respective parts. And I have only a few friends whom I would consider "punk." And I am more at ease because of that. With my hammer and chisel as my words and my breath, and your ears as a slab of marble, my golden advice to you hardcore junior nazi outback punk rock law enforcers is to lighten up! Absorb as much culture and knowledge as humanly possible and break free of the chains of the corporate and capitalist ways of some mall punks who have just walked out of Hot Topic with shopping bags of new merchandise. Abuse the public transit systems and live liberally with your riotous fists extended highly into the air!
Viva la revolucion!
Yo soy un bebe feliz!
John Fox
Portland, Oregon

Dear John,
Why do you hate punks so much?
—Anandi

Hey there *Maximum Rocknroll*-ers,
Here's the deal—right now I am learning first hand the oppression of the US "justice" system and the US Bureau of Prisons. I am doing a six-month stint at Dublin Federal Prison Camp for my non-violent participation in active non-violence by trespassing onto Ft. Benning military base in Georgia with the goal of exposing and closing the US Army's School of the Americas, now known as the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation. (Could that sentence have been a little longer?) I'm gonna assume that whoever's reading this is aware of the US training school for Latin American terrorists, as it's a topic I've seen mentioned in *MRR*, but if you don't, you need to, so I'll throw in a web address; www.soaw.org.

While I'm here, I plan on being as outspoken as possible on US foreign policy and other corporate backed military policies carried out behind the taxpayers' backs, which ruin economies and lives around the world. I'm collecting good reading and reference material. My new buddy Joy passed on a couple issues of *MRR* and *Punk Planet* which I'm thoroughly grateful for. Of them all, it was your Nov 2001 (#222) that really got me going. That issue is amazing! From the letters to the editors up to the commentary from Howard Zinn and Norman Soloman, the whole thing was like a breath of fresh air at a time when I was still finding my voice in this institution appropriately planted on an army base. Eeeck!
In hope and struggle,
Chani Geigle-Telle,r 9096-020
Federal Prison Camp Dublin
5675 8th st, Camp Parks
Dublin, CA

Dear *MRR*,
I would like to send out a special request to all atheists out there, especially those who are incarcerated. Stand up and be proud!

During my first six years of incarceration, I have witnessed a behavior I find unacceptable. Atheists hiding their true beliefs, or lack thereof. Granted, there are reasons for some to remain in hiding. Because of my lack of fear in expressing my views, I have been threatened by Christians (several times, in fact) a trait inherently indicative of Christians when faced with views opposite their own. But it is not limited to just Christians. This is, in my experience, an all-inclusive religious response. Peace, love, tolerance? Give me a break! Believe or Die should be their motto!

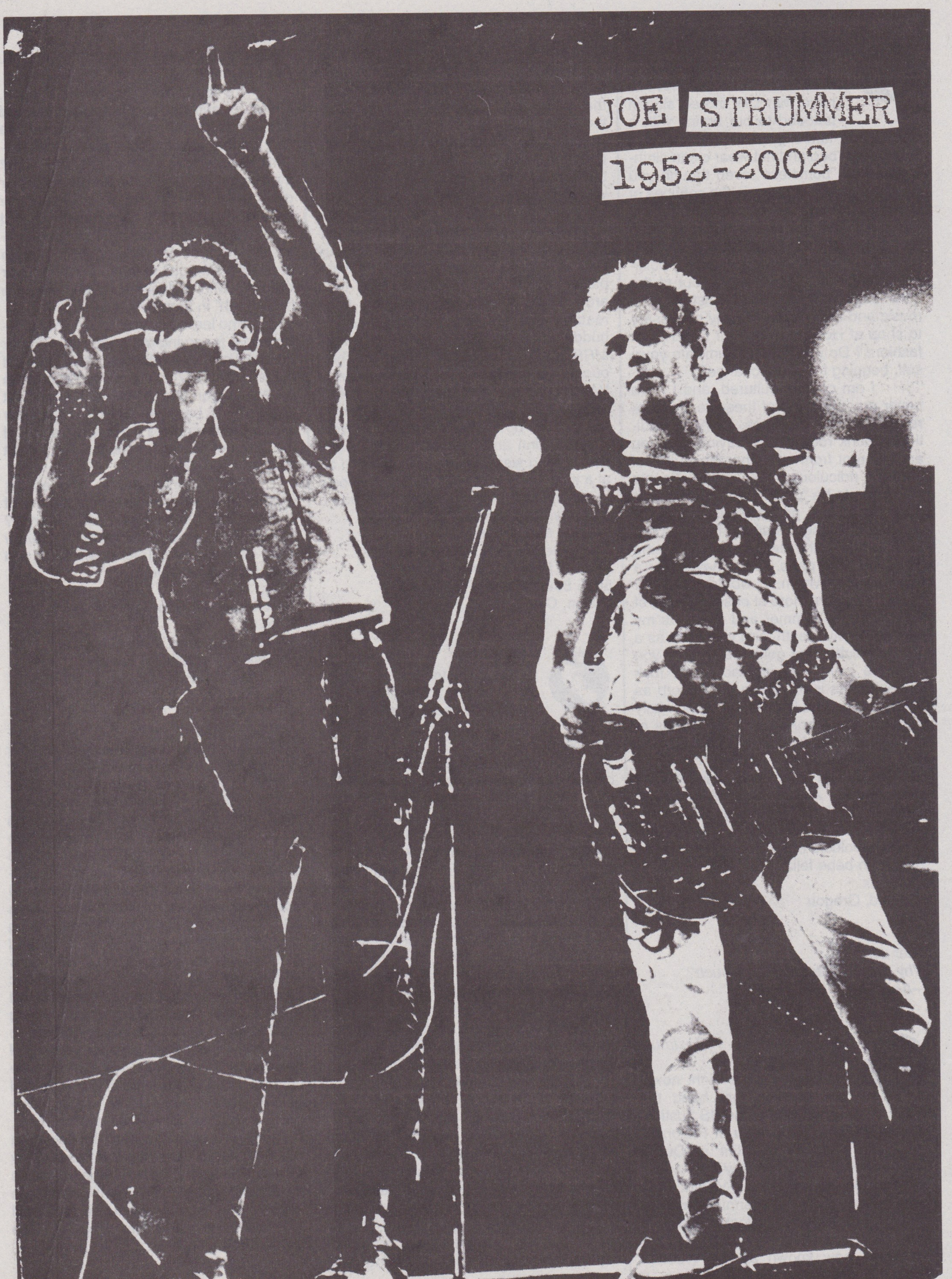
Recently, in the news, two atheists stood up and would not back down. Their names elude me at the moment but they should be applauded; the father who opposed "One nation under God" in the Pledge of Allegiance his daughter was being forced to recite, and the Boy Scout who was kicked out of the Scouts because he refused to succumb to the threats. Yeah, he could have pretended to believe so he could have remained a Scout, something he dearly loved. But he knew to even pretend would contradict his beliefs, so he stood strong and refused to be manipulated and controlled. I salute you!

It's far past time atheists unite, stand up, and not give in to masters and delusions. It's far past time to dispel the lies, myths, and misconceptions of atheism. An atheist is a worshipper of Satan? If we reject any and all concepts of God or gods, then how in the world would we believe in Satan? Through ignorance and stupidity? Believe me, I am highly educated and my eyes are wide open. To people of all religions, quit trying to program your children with delusions, allow them to have "faith" in themselves.

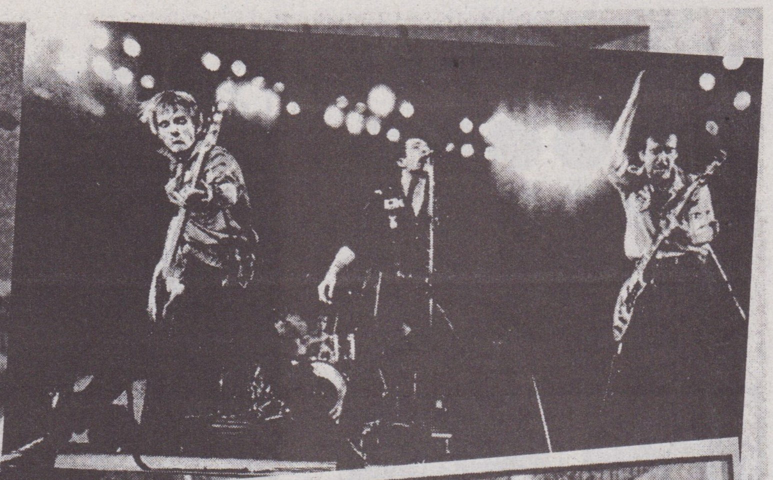
And leave the entertainment industry alone, for crying out loud! Harry Potter does not promote witchcraft. And even if it did, so what?! What's it to you? I've yet to have a person who believes in witchcraft threaten me because I don't share their views. Furthermore, I don't share some of the views of Native Americans. But I don't hear any war drums.

Which brings me to a question; what is the one common denominator of al wars this planet has seen? Money? Sometimes. Religious beliefs? Every time. Peace, Love, Tolerance? After you have bombed everyone.
Truly,
a proud atheist who wants to talk to you.
Write to:
Alfred J. Laurence #256371
Riverside Correctional Facility
777 West Riverside Dr., Ionia, MI 48846

Dave Hyde,
I was very shocked at your attitude towards mohawks; some of the most punk people I know have mohawks. Also a lot of bands have mohawks such as a Global Threat, the Unseen, the Casualties. In my opinion, if you were so punk, then you wouldn't be so superficial,you would have better things to worry about as opposed to whether mohawks are cool. Also, punk isn't about being cool, it's about who you want to be,and getting your message across, etc. Your attitude towards mohawks is as pathetic as saying you won't be someones friend because they are wearing a jumper you don't like. Have you actually ever been to England? I have lived here for years and apart from the weather, it is a really nice country. I don't know what the stan is and neither does anyone else I know, obviously according to you we are not cool, but I tell you what, we don't fucking care coz we'd rather be uncool than as shallow as you. Here is my friend's email who has a mohawk so if you want to debate whether mohawks are cool you can email him. blamethevicar@hotmail.com. I hope to hear from you soon.
—love from Lisa xxx


JOE STRUMMER
1952-2002
URB

"White Riot" is among the heaviest Clash live tunes going. "No more Beatles, Stones, Elvis in 1977!" (P



● The Clash have a new drummer, 21-year-old Nicky Headon (second from left), who joins the band on the eve of their first major British tour.

● Headon, who previously worked as an office clerk, told the Melody Maker: "I can relate to the Clash on a political level. I've been through the unemployment bit. I've been made to take jobs that I didn't want at all.

● "Captain Beefheart is my main musical influence. I like all sorts of music, anything with a lot of energy.

● "I knew Mick (Jones, the Clash's guitarist) from about a year and a half ago. For a week I played with his band, the London S.S., when Brian James of the Damned and Tony James of Generation X were in it too.

● "Then I didn't see him for ages until I bumped into him at the Kinks concert at the Rainbow last month. I'd never seen them play but I was really excited as soon as I did. They are incredible. I really wanted to join. They are by far the best band in the country."

● The Clash's full line-up is now, left to right, Joe Strummer, Headon, Mick Jones and Paul Simonon.

● The band's new single, their follow-up to "White Riot," is "Janie Jones," a track from their debut album. The tour starts at Guildford Civic Hall on Sunday (May 1).

MORE

ONATHAN

10cc on tour

Rods are good; not as raucou

The Clash, shown here, were recently signed by Columbia. Alex called that label, hoping to get some info, and they said, "We don't know what you're

GOD, WHAT A BUMMER! STUCK HERE WITH JOE STRUMMER!

THE CLASH AT BELSEN... 'ALL JOURNALISTS ARE SWINE'

BY CHRIS SALEWICZ, WHO DUCKS AND RUNS

Joe Strummer —vocales y guitarra, Mick Jones —guitarra, Paul Simonon —bajo y Terry Chimes —batería, fueron los integrantes [illegible] The Clash, [illegible] la intensidad emocional de [illegible] de grupos [illegible] The Clash, [illegible] imaginar la vida en la gran urbe de concreto y vidrio a los pueblos industriales que rodean a Londres.

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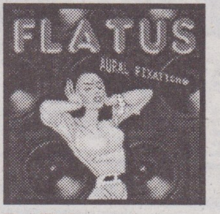

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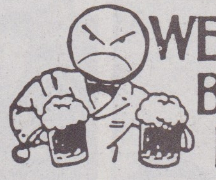

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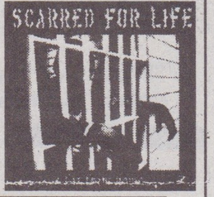

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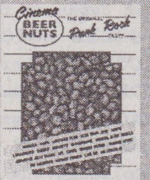

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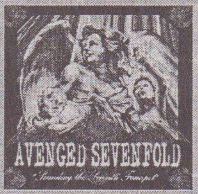

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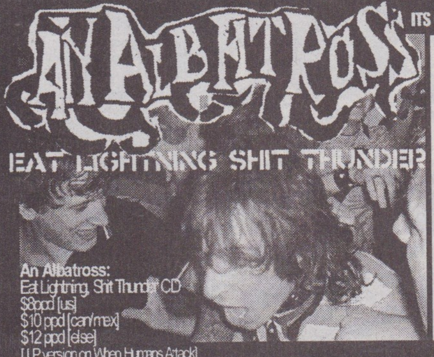

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(TWELVE BUCKS)
A Scathing examination: what are you really doing for 12 bucks an hour?
++Maryland 355 | (Ben Scholle)
A self critical comedy in which Anarchists searching for a meaningful approach to social activism adopt a highway. Featuring Eric Hammer (Frail), author Carissa Vandenberk Clark & Scott Beibin (bloodlink / lost film fest)
++Anarchy in LA | (Jino Choi)
A primer on the most misunderstood philosophy of modern history. This piece dispels the common myths and misconceptions about anarchism while pointing out its relevance and influence in the current protest movement. Cameo appearance by the infamous Spock Bloc
++Crowd Bites Wolf | (Guerillavision)
The World Bank and the IMF, both dedicated to vacuuming wealth& resources from the poorest people on earth, & into the pockets of the west, met in Prague during late September 2000. The bureaucrats were greeted by a color coded insurrectionist army massed to monkeywrench the meeting by using a variety of direct action tactics. Despite an unprecedented police mobilization, a united resistance on the streets of Prague would once again send the corporate sponsored scumbag tyrants packing. Appearances by the fabled Infernal Noise Brigade, YA BASTA! (Tutti Bianchi), and, of course, the ever fabulous Revolutionary Anarchist Black Bloc. A propaganda tool to play at your parents

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++Piefight '69 | (Sam Green/ Christian Bruno)
Unearthed footage lost since 1969 of the notorious 'pie-fight' incident at the San Francisco Film Festival. Two dozen costumed radicals descend on the fancy black tie & red carpeted festival with one fully laden pie truck and six cameras in order to wreak havoc.
++The Manipulators | (Andrew Jeffrey Wright / Clare Rojas)
Andrew Jeffrey Wright & Clare Rojas (Space 1026) use their animation superpowers to to hijack a fashion magazine and manipulate the images used to manipulate us.
++Sean Connery Golf Project |(Sara Rimensnyder/Rhys Southan)
Two kids infiltrate Sony Pictures' studios, steal a screenplay,rewrite it, and return it as a better movie. The punchline is that the detourned script almost went into production before anyone was the wiser. oops!
++Anarchy Carpet | (Siketrike)
A carpet roams the streets of Baltimore convincing the kids that a life of egalitarian cooperation would be more fun than living under consumer capitalism. (starring CEX)
++The Horribly Stupid Stunt ...(The Yes Men)
An international law conference writes to Gatt.org inviting WTO Director-General Michael Moore (not the good one)to present at their forum in Austria. Big mistake: It turns out the site is run by the Yes Men, a loose-knit group of anti-capitalist culture jammers who regularly orchestrate pranks vs."the man"!

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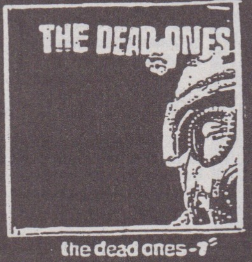

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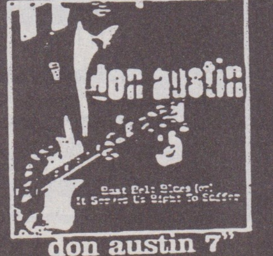

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COLUMNS

I drink to make other people interesting. —George Jean Nathan

When I read about the evils of drinking, I give up reading. —Henny Youngman

Mykel Board sez:
YOU'RE WRONG!

I'm going to burst. Six tall women, blondes, in black leather bikinis, tower above me. I'm on my back, my arms and legs tied to pegs shoved into the ground. I can feel a light piece of cloth, like a shroud, covering my body. For some reason, I can't turn my head. One of the women, the tallest, a small mole connecting her upper lip to her face, laughs like a horror movie villain. She moves toward what looks like an oil tank, right at the edge of my vision. On the side of the tank is a rotating valve. The woman turns it.

There is something in my mouth. A plastic tube. It presses on the back of my throat. Warm liquid moves from the tank through the tube into my mouth. Its Guinness-like consistency slides down my throat, into my stomach. They're trying to kill me, these women. Make me explode. I tense my abdominal muscles. It's no use. The liquid fills my stomach. I push harder. I'm winning. The liquid reverses direction. It moves from my stomach around the tube in my mouth, coming out the sides, spilling down my cheeks. I wake up.

In half consciousness, I know I'm lying on my stomach. My face is warm and sticky. My eyes seem glued shut. Struggling, I open them. A shiny sea spreads out in front of me. Light brown in color, a few chunky white islands float on the surface. Then, the smell hits me.

I did it again. Puked in bed. Goddammit! I already changed the sheets this month. My left cheek rests in yesterday's stout. I don't want to get up. My stomach jerks. It's like I'm being fist-fucked by Patrick Ewing. I have to get up. I slide out of bed pushing the puke puddle over the side. It makes little tap tap tap sounds as it drips onto the floor.

I crawl to the bathroom and manage to sit down, just as another heave rises from my innards. I don't know which end is up. I need two toilets: one for shit, one for puke. I grab the plastic pail I use to wash out my socks. That'll do for n... URRP! UUUAAAAAHH! BRRRRRRRRRRRP!

I burst. My bowels open as I puke into the bucket. I expel the midriff misery with such force that it enters my sinus, my nose, from behind. A great gob lodges itself behind the right nostril.

I snort to expel it. It's immovable. Panicking, I sniff it back. Forcing it down into my lungs. I gag, cough, throw up some more. I don't think I'm going to make it to work today.

"I've... er... got the flu," I say, glad I'm the only person I know with a phone in the bathroom.

"Again?" comes the concerned voice on the other side. "You really have to take better care of yourself."

"Echinacea," I gasp into the phone. "I'll take some echinacea."

Fast forward to Wednesday. It's DRINK CLUB night. DRINK CLUB is my invention. It's been going for about five years, usually on Wednesdays. We go to a different bar every week. It started with me and a couple of my students. Since then it's grown: a hundred and fifty people on the email list. Not that they all show up. The record is 35. The minimum... one. Only me. But, come hell or Muslim airplanes, there is DRINK CLUB.

This one is in a sleazy little bar in Hell's Kitchen. Super jukebox: Iggy, Clash, Ramones. There's a blonde bartender, with a severe yet sexy face, like the women in my dream a few paragraphs ago.

There are five of us: me, Kunio, Kumada, Reo, and Ms. S, the only girl tonight.

I've ordered my third Brooklyn Lager. Ms. S wears one of those motherly looks that girls put on when they want to show their concern for you, even though they don't want to fuck you.

"Mykel," she says, "have you ever worried that you drink too much?"

"Nope," I answer. "Why should I? I never *need* a drink. It's just that I often decide to have one."

"But I never see you out without a beer in your hand," she says.

"Yeah," I tell her, "but I know when to stop."

"Mykel!" she says. "I've seen you get so smashed you puked on your guests."

"That's when I stop," I tell her.

But like an insidious TV commercial, her voice keeps ringing in my head. I know what she's suggesting. I've heard it before.

"Get help," they say.

I know what that means.

But AA scares me. Everything I've heard about it says it's a cult. Jim Goad's *12 Steps to Hell* essay scared the shit out of me. But, I'm tough enough to spend a year in Mongolia, and sit through a timeshare sales presentation in Las Vegas. Cults don't have a chance with me. No one can brainwash me.

Besides, what is a cult anyway? Something like the Moonies? A closed group where you do weird stuff and people kill you if you try to leave? I donno.

I do a bit of Googling and find some sites, mostly from former cult members. A few others are from religious groups that focus on why *they* are a religion and everyone else is a cult. Those I ignore.

Boiling down what I find, the main features of a cult are:

1. *Confession:* They have sessions in which you confesses to your sins. These happen within small groups with an active thrust toward personal change.

2. *Sacred Science:* The group maintains an aura of sacredness around its basic doctrine or ideology. It holds that ideology as the ultimate moral vision. Questioning or criticizing those basic assumptions is prohibited. The group demands a reverence for the ideology/doctrine.

3. *Jargon:* Words are given new meanings. The outside world does not use the words or phrases in the same way. These words become "group" words or phrases, acting like a code within the group.

4. *Repetition:* The group's doctrine is repeated over and over. There are lots of repetitious lectures and meetings.

5. *Isolation:* Members' subservience to the group causes them to cut ties with family and friends. They also give up personal goals and activities that were of interest before joining the group. Members are encouraged or required to live and socialize only with other group members.

6. *Mystical Manipulation:* The group seeks to promote specific patterns of behavior and emotion so that they appear to have arisen spontaneously. Actually they have been orchestrated. God, history, or some supernatural force, requires the group to carry out the "principles." Those principles are put forcibly and claimed exclusively, so the cult and its beliefs become the only true path to salvation.

7. *Doctrine Over Personal Experience:* If you question the beliefs of the group or the leaders of the group, they make you feel there is something inherently wrong with you—even to question. The question is always "turned around." The questioner/criticizer is questioned rather than the questions answered directly. The underlying assumption is that doctrine/ideology is ultimately more valid, true and real than any

aspect of actual human character or human experience. One must subject one's experience to that "truth." You should associate an experience of contradiction with guilt. The group makes you feel that doubts are reflections of your own evil.

8. *Charismatic or messianic leader(s):* Messianic leaders either say they are God *or* that they alone can interpret the scriptures the way God intended. The leaders are self-appointed.

With those criteria in mind, I check the AA website to find a meeting in Manhattan. It's as easy as finding a Starbucks.

I chose one marked as "good for beginners." It's at a place called the WHEAT GERM, in Midtown on the East Side.

It's pouring outside. A *Noreaster*. It happens in New York every November. Howling wind, huge downpour, lasts for hours. What's a little rain? Am I gonna melt?

The meeting's scheduled to start at 6:15. It's 6 o'clock when I get out of the subway. I walk the block and a half to the WHEAT GERM. By the time I get there, my clothes are soaked through. I want to be wrung dry. Squeezed like a bar rag. I'm cold, sniffling, and ready for adventure.

The WHEAT GERM is in a ritzy residential neighborhood, not far from Park Avenue. I peek into the basement and see a bunch of chairs set up in rows. No one is in the chairs. The room is lit, but empty.

What am I thinking? They're gonna be early? A bunch of alkies? No fuckin' way they're gonna start before 7. I'll get there at 6:30. That way, I can talk to someone. Ask a few questions. This is supposed to be a good meeting for beginners. They won't mind.

I head off to the grocery store and buy a bag of Doritos to quench my hunger and get out of the rain. I eat under an awning in front of a nail salon. At 6:25, I head back for the WHEAT GERM. The meeting is in progress.

Entering through the basement door, I pass a coffee urn, a bunch of literature, and a bulletin board. On the bulletin board is a notice for a meeting concentrating on THE BIG BOOK. I later learn that's the Bible of AA. [Cult item number 2: sacred science] Right now, I turn right, go through a wooden door into a small basement room.

It's a simple place, painted tan and bright green. Part of the room is hidden, around the corner from the doorway. As I enter, a nerdy guy wearing a yarmulke reads from a laminated piece of paper. I stand in the doorway as he reads "Spiritual." He repeats the word several times. After he finishes, he sees me standing there and removes his wet coat from the next seat. I sit down. He doesn't even nod hello.

Once installed, I look around the room. There is a fake fireplace. Next to the fireplace is a thin man in his late thirties. He wears a gray homo-style mustache and has close-cropped salt and pepper hair. He seems to be leading the group.

Most of the other people in the room are young, between 18 and 30. About two thirds are guys. There are few bum-looking people, grey beards, holey gloves, with the kind of wizened skin earned through a life on the street. Most, however, looks like a New York mix of office ladies, skaters, college kids, and whatever they call the new depression version of yuppies.

One of those yuppies, a clean cut Oriental man in chinos and a button-down shirt, sits in front of the room next to the leader.

Over the fireplace, looking very much like ten commandment tablets, are the 12 steps of THE PROGRAM.

"We have a guest with us," says the mustachioed man. "He's from the Metropolitan group... is that right?"

The Oriental nods.

Then he starts talking.

"My name is Bill," he says, "and I'm an alcoholic."

"Hi Bill," comes the crowd response... in eerie simultaneity.

"Despite the weather," Bill continues, "There's no place I'd rather be than at a meeting."

He talks about his life history. His early drinking. His parents' drinking. How he was *in denial* and how he ended up in the loony bin.

"I didn't realize what was happening to me," he says. "But then I noticed my hand shaking, my legs shaking. I thought, *it's the drinking. I've got to stop.* But I couldn't stop. That's when I realized I needed help."

He talks for about fifteen minutes. He says the word "God" seven times during that fifteen minutes. God helped him. God gave him the chance to go to AA. He realized God alone could do it for him. He had hated God. Then he realized God was giving him the chance.

Me? I'm starting to get God-creeped-out.

"Now I feel strong," he says toward the end of the talk. "Just today, I passed a bar. The kind of place I used to like. Dark, sleazy, anonymous. I walked right by that bar. I felt like going in, but I walked right by. That old life, that's just bullsh..." He taps the wall as if this will prevent him from continuing his profanity.

"That's wrong," he corrects himself. "But I still have to work. I'm not cured. There are always these two cells that say, *I don't need the program. I can do it myself.* I have to struggle against those cells. [Cult item number 6: Mystical Manipulation]

"It's one day at a time. I have my friends. My mentor. Ninety five percent of my friends are from AA. I don't need those people in the bar." [Cult item number 5: isolation]

During the talk there are a few murmurs, a few "yeahs," but not loud. When he finishes, there is no applause. Mustachioed man says "Thank you for sharing."

Then, it's time for comments from the floor. I expect people to ask him questions. Find out about his life and how it's improved. People talk about themselves. [Cult item number 1, confession].

The talks start with a guy just around the corner from me. I can only see his goatee and wool hat. He could be an emo kid at a Fugazi show.

"My name is Caleb," he says. "I'm an alcoholic."

Caleb? What kind of name is Caleb? No wonder he's got a drinking problem.

"HI CALEB," comes the simultaneous response.

"I've been sober only four months," he says. "Sometimes it's so hard. I have friends. They're in the program, but my old friends try to get me back into my old life. They call me. Say, *Hey Caleb, why don't you come out with us.* They know I'm not drinking, but they go to places where people drink. They say it's OK if I don't drink. But my body doesn't say that. I have to tell them no. I have to find a meeting. That's why I'm here tonight." [Cult item number 5, isolation]

"Thank you for sharing," comes from a few voices.

Is this where that phrase came from? *Thank you for sharing*. That ironic throwaway that you use when someone farts, or explains that they've gotta take a serious shit? It's AA jargon?

Next to speak is a girl at the end of the row I'm sitting in. Kind of pretty, in a Midwest blond potato-faced way. She's probably pushing 23, but not very hard. She introduces herself.

"My name is Melissa," says the girl. "I'm an alcoholic." [Cult item number 4, repetition.]

"HI MELISSA," comes the response.

"I really hate being an adult," says the kid. "I just wish I could be a kid again and play with toys. And have mom and dad take care of me."

"I'm still in college," she continues. "And my college friends wanted me to join them for dinner. At a restaurant. I did it, and I watched them drink. Not get drunk, but just drink. And I thought. *If only I could have a glass of wine.* That's all I wanted: just one glass of wine to go with dinner. That would have satisfied me. But then I remembered the principles. I knew I couldn't just take one drink. I know what the BIG BOOK says." [Cult item number 2, sacred science]

"Thank you for sharing," says someone.

Gradually, one at a time, people talk about how they've avoided their friends, changed their daily routine, and made coming to meetings the most important thing in their lives.

Cult item number 3, jargon, goes into overdrive. You've got *enabling, outgoing (in a special sense), intervention, mentor and THE PROGRAM* up the wazoo. Not to mention ALCOHOLIC.

"My name is Amree," says an attractive lesbo-looking woman who's been sitting in the back of the room. "And I'm an alcoholic."

"HI AMREE," comes the response.

[Note: I'm not sure if I got the name right. It *sounded* like AMREE to me, but it could have been Ann-Marie or something else. Is Amree even a name?]

"I want to thank Bill for sharing with us," she continues. "Especially his talking about the physical effects. We know what's in our minds, but sometimes I used to just start shaking

and didn't realize. I used to throw up blood. Stay in bed with the chills. My body lost control and I'd wake up in a pool of piss."

"Thank you for sharing," says someone in on the other side of the room. Anywhere else, it'd be sarcasm.

A few more guys talk, including a punky looking one, with muscles, a neck tattoo and a soaking wet flight jacket. He's just been in the program for a short while. Now he complains how his friends don't understand and how hard it is to stick with it.

"It's more than just *not drinking*," he says. "It's THE PROGRAM. It's so hard, but you've got to stick with the program. The answers are there. It's the only thing that works. You have to give up a lot to do this. Your friends, your life. You just have to do it." [Cult item number 6, mystical manipulation]

"I don't have a mentor yet. I know I've got to do that. I need someone. Not a friend, but someone tough, strict. It's next for me. I'll do it."

It looks like *everyone* is going to say something. Not in any particular order, but as time passes, there are no repeats. No questions either. What happens when I'm the only one who hasn't spoken? Sure as a beer fart, I'm not gonna say, "My name is Mykel Board and I'm an alcoholic."

Next to speak is Brenda. An attractive somewhat athletically built blond girl with a slightly British accent.

"My name is Brenda," she says, "and I need to talk."

JEEZUS FUCKIN' CHRIST!!!! She didn't say "I'm an alcoholic." Are they gonna smite her? Kick her out in the rain? Take away her tokens?

"I know I'm supposed to say, *I'm an alcoholic*," she continues. "That's the cliché. That's what everyone makes fun of. But I can't say it. I'm just not sure."

A stony silence comes over the group. No one thanks her for sharing.

Brenda, Brenda, Brenda. I love you. You're so brave. You can beat 'em. I know you can. We can make beautiful love together, Brenda. You and me toasting in 15 different languages. Offering ourselves to Pan and Bacchus. Marry me Brenda!

"But I guess I am..." she says, spoiling it all. "I mean, two months ago, while I was drinking... not while I was drinking but after... I mean not when I was drunk... I sat in the cafeteria... but I couldn't eat. I had to sit at the table with my hands folded. They were shaking... my hands I mean... shaking so I thought I'd drop the fork if I picked it up... then I realized..."

I don't hear the rest. I'm just pissed off. I want to run over to her and grab her. Shake her. Brenda. Brenda. Brenda. My dear Brenda. We ALL shake sometimes. It can be low blood sugar, nerves, a random twitch. You think it's alcohol because you believe this crap. If they say alcoholism gives you pimples and you get a pimple... presto, you're an alcoholic. Brenda. Brenda. Brenda. My blonde athletic British Brenda. You have the rebel in you. Why do you cave in?

I'm getting very uncomfortable. I know this is not the place for me. But more than that, I feel an overwhelming sense of sorrow for these young shlubs. They've turned themselves over to a bunch of mind-manipulating nonsense.

Next to speak is an attractive dark-haired boy in a suit. He's got a thin smooth face, dark hair and the kind of innocent eyes that make you want to bend him over.

"My name is Eric," he says in a strong Southern drawl. "I'm an alcoholic."

"HI ERIC," comes the reply.

"You know. These meetings are the best thing that's ever happened to me." He continues, "I guess when you think about it, it's sad to say that. But it's true. You go to work. You come home and then what? What else is there?"

I like this guy. He may be in the AA clutches, but there's a spark. Some kind of thinking, awareness of life. I'm gonna talk to him after the meeting. Invite him out for a drink.

Eric rambles a bit. He talks about someone at work, a girl at the office. She offered everyone a brownie.

"Then she told me... *they're extra good,* she said. There's rum in them... I ran to the bathroom. Spit it up in the toilet... but I wonder. It wouldn't get me drunk. One brownie... what would've happened if I ate it? Just that brownie... no drink. What would've happened? Nothing?"

No one answers. They don't have to. Although no one corrects or criticizes Eric, he knows he's said something wrong. He stumbles.

"I mean," he says, "I guess nothing would've happened. But you never know. I mean, it wouldn't be good. It wouldn't be with THE PROGRAM." [Cult item number 7: Doctrine over Personal Experience]

After Eric there are only a half dozen people or so who haven't spoken. Besides me, the only non-speakers are one of the old bums, a fat guy with a bushy beard, the guy next to me with the yarmulke, a big guy with hands like hamhocks who, for much of the meeting, closes his eyes and rocks back and forth like a Jew in prayer.

The only female not to speak is a late-thirty looking woman in a grey skirt suit. She starts after Eric.

"My name is Gail," she says. "I'm an alcoholic."

HI GAIL.

Gail's life is busy at the office. A new project came in and she had to go almost a week without a MEETING. Then, one of the women in the next office was diagnosed with breast cancer. She was on chemotherapy and very weak.

"It was late," says Gail. "It's pouring out. The woman upstairs needed help. She can't walk well. She might slip in the rain. *I'll help her,* I thought. Then I stopped myself. I'm not a martyr. I've been a martyr enough to alcohol. I'm using this helping as an excuse to miss a meeting. Which is more important? So I left the woman. She'll find a way. But, I made the right decision. I'm at this meeting."

That's when *I* make the right decision. I leave the meeting. On a run. Through the rain. Back onto the subway. Back home.

When I walk through the door, I start to shake, get the sweats, feel nauseous. I have to lie down. Take my temperature. AA voodoo?

Nope, I'm okay. It's just low blood sugar. I have a slice of bread and feel hunky-dory... except for Gail's voice still ringing in my ears: talking about how meetings are more important that helping sick people.

Well, is AA a cult? Except for item number 8, the charismatic leader, it passes the test. I rate it cult. At least it's a religion.

I ask Gundahm, a pal of mine, recently lost to the AA-ites.

"Cult shmult, it works," he says. "We don't really care what you call it. It keeps us sober."

So would a lobotomy! It *is* a lobotomy. No, it's a deal with Satan. You give up your freedom. Sell your soul to THE PROGRAM. Admit you have no control. Live by THE BIG BOOK, and we'll keep you from drinking. But don't challenge the rules, or you'll die.

Jeezus fuckin' Christ. That's a deal? I'd rather sleep in my own vomit than in the soul-destroying puke of THE PROGRAM. I need a drink. Nope, I *decide* to have a drink. Get it?

ENDNOTES: [*Visitors to my website: mykelboard.com or subscribers (email to: god@mykelboard.com) will receive a few extra endnotes. There are just too many to keep up with.*]

—>*Further reading dept:* For those who're interested in more reading on AA, try http://www.positiveatheism.org/rw/alcohol.htm#DENIAL.

By the way, my cult information came from a number of sites, but most importantly: http://www.refocus.org/charcult.html based on the work of Dr. Robert Jay Lifton in his book *Thought Reform & the Psychology of Totalism.*

—>*Huh dept?* The name of the CD is *Ya Nfheni Shin Düu.* At least that's what it says on the front. I think the band is CONCIENCIAS MUERTAS. They go from hardcore to keyboard reggae and back to hardcore like I go from boy to girl and back to boy. Amazing. You can and should contact them at con_mertas@yahoo.com.mx. If you can, write in Spanish... or whatever the fuck language *Ya Nfheni Shin Düu* is.

Also on the listening front is ATAQUE FRONTAL who I thought made a punk version of *Metal Machine Music.* At least that's what it sounded like when I put it in the CD player. Noise noise noise with hardcore stuck in there somewhere. I was wrong.

The CD starts with a video, some moshing, some stills, a lot of crowd shots. I thought "Video Interactivo" was the name of the song!

You can hear their angry stuff for yourself. Just contact 'em at ataquefrontal@hotmail.com. I *think* they're from Peru, but it doesn't say.

—>*Funnier than GWB dept* I read about the guy in an old AMOK catalog. His name is Philip José Farmer. He's a science fiction

writer, who in his later years went off the deep end. Deep end is right.

I just read *Image of The Beast* and I'm still laughing. It's a parody of Gothic sci-fi vampire porn books. Is that a big enough genre to parody? I can't imagine, but these books are so hilarious. Read it and weep... tears of laughter. Don't miss a human headed snake, with a goatee, that comes out of her snatch to crawl up his asshole.

—>*Mongols can be fun dept.* The Mongol Tolbol newspaper reports that a Mongolian hip hop group called ICE TOP does a Mongolian version of Eminem's "Marshall Mathers." They've changed the focus, a bit... to make it more Mongolian. According to the paper, The Mongolian chorus of the song (called "Song to Mother," in Mongolian) goes "I love you so much, mother I always need my mother's love."

—>*Yeah! Dept:* I'm not gonna tell you anything about this one, except that she should send me email right away! My address as usual is listed above. You can find out what I'm talking about at http://www.ratemyface.com/profile.cfm?online_name=punkrockgrrrl

See you in Florida.

Punk Rock vs. The World

This month I'm up in the air. I've been running around, playing shows and seeing bands. Drinking too many beers, reading *Slug and Lettuce* late into the night, falling asleep in the van on the way back to Boston, hanging out with friends until I run out of words, drinking too much coffee, pushing myself to go to work everyday and not stay home and play in the snow or just get some sleep, thinking about war, greed and propaganda.

Through it all, music follows me everywhere. This column has an included sound track, so press PLAY now and turn the volume up. If you get lost, just turn the page when you hear the tone.

DING.

THE RAMONES rock soothingly on my stereo as I try to write it all down. "Now everybody's heard about the bird..."

It's cold as fuck; I'm wearing my big engineer boots and red wool scarf with my thrift store pajamas trying to keep warm in my snug attic apartment in Boston. Just before Thanksgiving, I woke up to find my window box under three inches of snow.

Things run hot and cold. Life is a horror show. Life is a fucking comedy.

The American war machine continues to rage ahead and things look bloody on the horizon. As I write this, at the beginning of December, US troops are on their way to Iraq and we wait for the bombs to drop.

Bush and gang continue to ignore the growing anti-war protests of people around the world.

DING.

The guitars crunch tight and the drums rally. "Who sets the laws of who lives and who dies?" GOOD RIDDANCE covers INSTEAD.

On November 9, an estimated 500,000 people rallied in Florence, Italy to protest globalization, neo-liberal policies and US plans to attack Iraq. It's been said it was the largest protest in Europe since WWII. Tens of thousands of people in both Berlin and Barcelona also protested against the recent US saber rattles. In the last couple of months, cities all across the US have seen their largest anti-war protests since Vietnam. Even tired punks like myself got out into the streets and rallied.

Dang. That fucking-cowboy-corporate-hick-President sure sticks to his six shooters.

DING.

BIKINI KILL screams bloody murder over a sickly sweet sarcastic verse, "All I am saying, is give peace a chance..."

Behind the war and terrorism hype and hysteria, the rift between the rich and poor grows every day, and US cities are reporting record numbers of homeless families seeking shelter this year. It's mostly women and their children, you know, who are filling the shelter homes past capacity at this time when the world grows cold.

DING.

A hundred people in the basement of ABC No Rio in NYC once screamed together, "Living proof that the system works, the system works, the system works–for *them*..." AUS ROTTEN.

According to the 2000 US census, over 30 million people–about one in ten–now live below the poverty line in the richest country in the world. And the official poverty line is pretty damn low. It's about $15,008 a year for a family of four. Even the conservative Joint Economic Committee of the Congress concluded last year that people need an income at least 50 percent *above* the official US poverty threshold to meet basic needs. Right now, one in every fifteen children in the United States lives at *less than half* of the poverty level, and doesn't get enough food.

Another day in the fucked up USA.

DING.

Chavo yells by himself, "It's not my imagination, I've got a gun in my back..." and a raw blazing guitar begins. BLACK FLAG.

War abroad brings oppression at home, and daily, it seems our rights are being eroded as the ill effects of the USA PATRIOT ACT begin to bloom like gin blossoms on the face of Lady Liberty. The "Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism" stinks to high hell.

Everyone, including your elementary school teachers, are being required to hand over what was before considered private information. The American Civil Liberties Union reported on their website this month (www.aclu.org) that the Pentagon's new Office of Information Awareness is building a system called "Total Information Awareness" that would effectively provide government officials with immediate access to all of our communications–including private phone calls, emails, web searches, financial records, purchases, prescriptions, school records, medical records and travel history. To top it all off, the new all-knowing military agency is being headed by none other than John Poindexter, who in 1990 was convicted of lying to Congress about his role in the Iran-contra affair. He's another 80s-era right wing dick making a comeback.

When I hear my modem dial or pick up the phone, I assume I'm patched right into the Feds. I do what I want, but I keep Big Brother in mind.

DING.

At the benefit for the Baltimore 28 at the Bloodshed I heard Adam belt out, "We're all afraid of getting hurt, we're all fucked up on high alert..." and the band raced on together. THE PROFITS.

We are living through some seriously fucked up times.

I hear people around me getting paranoid and scared, as the conservative Republican backlash is a rumble out to sea, a hurricane gathering strength and coming towards shore.

I have an image of Nixon in the back room laughing his ass off as our hard-won civil rights are being reversed so quickly.

"And the funny thing," Nixon giggles, "it's all been so easy!"

After decades of turning down whacked out ideas in favor of individual rights, Congress just gave up and signed on the dotted line. The USA PATRIOT ACT passed 356 to 66 in the house, and 98 to 1 in the Senate.

Kids, don't grow up to be spineless bastards.

The ghosts of Nixon, Kissinger, Reagan and all the other bastards are indeed glowing like newlyweds, as the Center for National Security Studies stated the USA PATRIOT ACT is simply "a collection of old policies that were taken off the shelf and dressed up" in the wake of September 11. It took Attorney General Ashcroft only a little over a week to draft the bill, and he demanded Congress pass the law immediately. Hell, it takes me over a week just to think of something to write for this column in *MRR*.

The USA PATRIOT ACT is these creepy old guys long lost wet dream of empowering the government by swallowing the rights of the people.

Nixon gives a wide grin and says; "Now we can *legally* spy on people without a warrant, and imprison them–indefinitely–without a hearing. Isn't that a hoot?"

Senator Russell Feingold, a Wisconsin Democrat, was the only Senator to vote against the bill. He said before the Senate, "Of course, there is no doubt that if we lived in a police state, it would be easier to catch terrorists…but that probably would not be a country in which we would want to live."

No shit, Feingold. Thanks for standing up. If I lived in Wisconsin, I'd shake your hand.

DING.

CRISPUS ATTUCKS now loud and furious, "revenge's swarming on the street, the taste of blood tasting sweet…"

In spite of it all, I'm feeling hopeful.

I turn the master volume on my guitar amp up and scream like hell. I let my fingers follow the power chords, the distortion bathes over me, and I lose myself in the chorus. I let my rage escape into the atmosphere.

Punk, if anything, is a good spit in the eye of those who claim authority over us.

And that makes me laugh and join the circle pit. Ha! You fuckers!

Punk is a homemade sticker that says, "Fuck Bush and This Unjust War" that you didn't expect to see at the bus stop on the way to work. Punk is some guy I saw at the Nashville airport with his two-foot mohawk up, just asking to be harassed in the security check. Punk is fucking thinking for your self. Punk, especially during fucked up times like these, is not letting the bastards get you down.

DING.

In my CD player for the hundredth time, "My life, no regrets, that's fine…it's my fucking life…" MOLOTOV COCKTAIL.

Punk is having the guts and the conviction to say what you believe in, even when the goons are bigger than you are.

DING.

Powerful military-esque snare drum rattles off, "Fuck them, I've chosen to make my stand, against what I feel is wrong with this land. They just sit with their overfed arses, feeding off the sweat of the less fortunate classes." CRASS.

Sometimes, people will surprise you.

On November 3rd, the weekend after Halloween, I went with my friends A and Gro to the anti-war rally in the Boston Commons. It turned out to be the largest and most diverse protest I've been to in the ten years I've been living in Boston. Between fifteen and thirty thousand people gathered to yell a loud and clear "Hell no!" to a possible war that is portrayed as popular in the evening news. The activist types were clearly outnumbered by regular folks from all around Boston. My favorite signs were poster boards taped to hockey sticks. It was as if SLAPSHOT had gone peacenik.

Of course, all the freaks were there too, including the Radical Cheerleaders, Food Not Bombs, the Black Bloc and Rich Mackin on a bike.

My two sisters in arms and I were dressed as "Witches Against War." We had a grand time, wearing our armbands and wigs and hats and black dresses, casting spells on the warmongers. It was fun, and I felt hopeful knowing so many people aren't buying into the establishment propaganda that says it's OK to bomb the hell out of other countries just because we say so.

My favorite sign was big and neon green with large black letters. It read, "BUSH IS A FUCKING ASSHOLE."

DING.

Sounds of people milling about, talking, band tuning up.

Another high point of optimism this month was playing a show at the Dumba space in Brooklyn with HIRETZUKHAN, WITCH HUNT and BEER GARDEN. There was a really amazing vibe to the show, as it was a benefit for Re-Sisters, a new group in Brooklyn that is coming together to support women in prison, and all of the bands were positive and played hard. Not too many shows I go to have women in all of the bands, and it was a refreshing change from the usual guy-dominated scene. Not that I don't love all my guy friends in bands (including the three guys in my band) it was just refreshing to be in an environment where women made up half, or more, of the people on stage.

It was a show were all of the bands completely rocked, there where no fights, it was BYO in a cup, the cops didn't show up, everyone danced, Gro got to come with us from Boston, we didn't get lost on the way to the show, and a little money was actually raised for an innovative project. Imagine that! It was a beautiful day. New York friends I hadn't seen since last summer showed up–Tim, Gabby Molotov, Maleke and Mike, and of course the infamous and wonderful Hope and Martin. I even got to hang out with Megan. A big thanks to Ari and Lizxnn for putting it all together, and to everyone there. Just as I was starting to feel closed off and depressed at everything going on, I was reminded of so many awesome people that make up this punk rock community.

DING.

VIOLINS sing beautifully as sometimes I'm a complete nostalgic sap smiling in my beer.

We had so much fun at Dumba that Adam's guitar cord was ripped apart. The end literally separated, leaving an empty plug in his amp with frayed wires sticking out. I took to the higher ground of the small stage as people danced furiously around the small room, and I saw Adam get smashed backwards into his amp. My guitar and mic got unplugged, we threw sparkles and army men, we laughed and played loud and fast and brutal, and I let out all my pent up aggression at the world.

DING.

Let me leave you with one last song. "Is this what you want to see? Is this how you want things to be? Question authority." CIRCLE JERKS.

STOP tape.

Static.

Endless Ransom Notes:

1.This past weekend my band THE PROFITS played a show in Long Island at a DIY space called Local 7. It was in Farmingdale, about 45 minutes east of the Brooklyn Bridge. The place looked like it used to be a repair garage, with a cement floor, and a bay door at the entrance. There was a sturdy homemade stage along one long wall and a very decent PA with only one working microphone. There were maybe sixty people at the show, and it was fun as hell. Cheers to everyone, except for the guy who molested a young girl at the show. Your time will come…

2. Speaking of dicks, I saw two at the Long Island show. One on the drummer of CESSPOOL REJECTS and the other attached to the drummer of ENDANGERED FECES who pissed in a cup and then proceeded to drink his own urine. What is it with drummers?

3. What a long column this month! You can check out my band's website at www.theprofits.org. We are planning another US tour again in early June. If you can help out with shows, or want to drop a line, please get in touch at theprofits@punks.org. Thanks.

4. "Tenacious" is a 'zine written entirely by women in prison, put together by volunteers from Re-Sisters, and published by Black Star Publishing in Brooklyn. It is a project entirely worthy of your support, as prisoners, especially women prisoners, have very few means of expression and communication with the outside. Most often, women prisoners are ignored, silenced or demonized by mainstream media. This 'zine includes excellent writings by women about abuse by guards, the prison system, racism, and fighting for basic rights. Write to V. Law, PO Box 20388, Tompkins Square Station, New York, NY, 10009.

5. Poverty is terrorism.

Licensed to Ill

Agoraphobia is a fucking weird thing. Folks who've got it know all about it. And the folks who don't, well, I guess they can just imagine.

I talk a lot about the tag-team bullshit of Panic Disorder and Agoraphobia in my column. And from what I can tell, people are hip to the Panic Disorder. Just about everybody can relate to the experience of just being overcome with unexplainable dread, fear, unreality, and a strong sense of urgent and impending

doom. But regular folks seem to have a harder time wrapping their head around the idea of agoraphobia.

Agoraphobia kind of manifests itself out of the routine and avoidance of panic. I mean, panic attacks are so fucking shitty. After enough of them, it's hard not to ascribe some sort of pattern to where they take place, and then begin avoiding those places. That's really the crux of agoraphobia: the avoidance.

Anyway, I read a metaphor in a book once that did a good job of explaining how you make the jump from Panic Disorder to Agoraphobia. I think it was *Panic Free* by Lynne Freeman. I'll paraphrase, with curses.

Imagine leaving your house. Just like, everything is fucking normal or whatever. On your way to work, you usually have to pass over some railroad tracks. One day, out of nowhere, your car stalls out on the tracks. As you are fumbling around with the ignition, you hear the sound of a fucking train barreling toward you with those whistles or horns or whatever blowing full steam. What the fuck? You are freaking out. You're all but sure you're doomed. Fucking dead. But then, just as this fucking thing is about to whack you, your car starts up and you are able to get out of the way.

After narrowly escaping an early demise, you go on about your day. The weird thing is, the next day, the same shit happens. Same spot. Same shit. You're no fucking wimp though. That shit was weird, but come on, it can't happen three days in a row. Day three rolls around and you stall out in the same spot, and the same terrifying shit happens. You are shaken up, so you go home. At some point you come to the conclusion that you are definitely not going that way to work any more.

So, the next day rolls around and you leave for work in a totally different direction. For whatever the fuck the reason, the same shit happens. Eventually, you just say, "fuck it, I'm not going out anymore." That phrase is really what agoraphobia is. It's just the knowledge that going out means you are going to endure brutal panic, so you just don't go out.

Now, of course attacks of panic aren't near death experiences, but they sure fucking feel like it. And chemically, the same shit is going on with your body and brain, as if you were actually in a life-threatening situation.

I went through years and years and years of fucked up vicious panic, and half-assed avoidance of situations and places, before I just threw in the towel and became completely agoraphobic. But that's basically how it happens. I had enough panic attacks with enough severity in enough places that I just gave it up and headed home.

I don't know. So I guess that's the metaphor for how people wind up with the dreaded Agoraphobia. Metaphors are weird though, and this shit is really complicated.

Fuckin' Eh?

I had a pretty good trip home from work the other day, and it really relates to the discussion of the relationship between Panic Disorder and Agoraphobia.

I was approaching the traffic light, just past the walk-in medical clinic, when I realized just how fucking normal I felt. Generally, I'm gearing up for the moderate, just bearable state of almost panic that I endure for the 7-10 minutes following that light. But for some fucking reason I felt totally normal and secure. No feeling of threatening panic, no impending doom. I didn't have sweaty palms, hot feet, or a racing head filled with thoughts of escape. I wasn't rubbing my head furiously, or clicking my teeth with my thumbnail. I wasn't even dicking around with my cell phone dialing people up as a distraction. It was just me and Ronkonkoma Avenue and I felt fine.

So, I settled into my seat a little, and actually enjoyed the ride home. I imagined this must be how other people get home from work. It was fucking sweet.

Once I got into "safe territory" I started thinking about my agoraphobia. Fuck, if driving were always that easy, I'd go all over the fucking place. Being entrenched in the agoraphobia for so long, I think sometimes I forget that.

The clarity that came with not panicking was fucking great. It really started to make sense. Agoraphobia is a reaction to the panic. It seems so simple, but in the midst of it all it's fucked up. Agoraphobia seems like this huge insurmountable complication of figuring out effective ways to get past certain traffic lights. But really, what it boils down to is not panicking. Because without that fucking panic, it's like all the traffic lights and all the highway exits are the same. They are all places that are safe and not intimidating or threatening at all.

And that's what became clear that day. If can figure out how to stop having panic attacks, I'll be able to go anywhere. That was the epiphany. And I've had it before too. I just hope this time I can hold on to it, and make it work.

New Format for the Floor Mat

Starting with next month's column, this shit is going to look a little different. Format change. I'm going to try to write more detailed straightforward first person accounts of my experiences with mental illness. Instead of writing about issues surrounding mental illness, I'm going in for the fucking vicious shit: daily life. I've had the feeling lately that my column is getting a little played. Hopefully this will turn out cool. If not, I hear George Tabb does a nice little column with first person accounts of things that happen to him. Doh.

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The Punk Rocker Mental Illness Pen Pal Network is up and running. If you are looking to connect with someone to write back and forth with about Mental Illness, send over your info, and I'll hook you up with a pen pal. The contact information is below.

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Past "Oh Man What The Fuck!?!??!" columns are available on the web at www.trafficviolation.com.

Destroy all motherfuckers: Wells Tipley, PO Box 772, East Setauket, NY, 11733 USA. Or email me at wells@trafficviolation.com.

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END NOTES:

1. I have a vague inclination to include some comment here about how I've been listening to nothing but alt country music. Honestly, I can't even remember the last time I heard a blastbeat. I'm all fucked up. "If whisky don't kill me, lord, I don't know what will." Oh, and shit.
2. THE DEVIL HIMSELF is a new band from Long Island that has members of old Long Island bands like THE HOWARDS, EXPLOSIVO!, SPLURGE, and CHECKERBOARD CHARLIE. They have a website that has more to do with goats than most other websites, and it is located at www.the-devil-himself.com. Also, Lubrano.
3. After about 7 or 8 years and 29 releases, I'm putting an end to Traffic Violation Records. The gory details will be up on the web by the time this shit hits newsstands, so if you are interested, you can check out how it all went down at www.trafficviolation.com.
4. The *Oh Man What The Fuck* column anthology zine is in the works! Since the website will be going down soon, I won't have the ability to archive this shit there. The plan is for the thing to include all the columns I've written for this here magazine right up until this here column. I'm hoping to pull my pal Lubrano away from his three channels of digital cable porn and have him do some illustrations. He's really deviant about the kind of sex he wants, and he's pretty well convinced that he's a sex addict, but he can draw wicked good.
5. Lubrano thinks I'm a sex addict too.
6. Ignore that shit about me not remembering the last time I heard a blast beat. Since writing that endnote, on the way to work I listened to this CROSSED OUT bootleg I have from a few years back. "The only good human, is a dead human!"

Ok, its 3:02 AM, I spent all day recording with THE SHEMPS. Mike gave me the "Donde es el Column!" message. And I thought! Oh man when I wrote that 2 part thing about how I always get caught whenever I do something obnoxious. I totally forgot about 2 really stupid ones!

Anyhow the reason Mike Thorn said "Donde es el column!" has everything to do with this. A few years ago (aw shit I'm totally outing myself now for those of you who have any sort of

MRR chronology knowledge) every couple of days this woman would wake me up early in the fuckin morning (11 AM, yeah I know, I know, screw you, though—yer job sucks) she would say, "Miguel!?" and I'd say, "No Miguel, wrong number." She would insist, "Miguel!" and I would just hang up. A couple of months later, my grandpa got my number and started calling me at 8 AM. Since then I've had caller ID. So this woman wouldn't quit it, and after two weeks of her searching for Miguel, I got so angry that an overwhelming reclamation of high school Spanish came over me and I shouted, "No Miguel vive aquí, usted tiene el número incorrecto!" Then I went and changed my answering machine to say, "Hey this is Bill, leave me a message, and if you speak Spanish, please die." A few days later when I didn't have my column in on time, Tim Yo called and left the message, "Donde es el column?"

Anyhow, if that was the story, you'd be now saying, what a stupid story. That's not the story.

About a month later, I get woken up at 8 AM. It's not the phone, it's not the apartment buzzer, it's someone knocking at my door. I figured it was my irate mailman. Ya know how mailmen have that stereotype of being unsociable miserable losers who are about to hurt a whole mess of people as soon as their lazy ass decides to get enough ammo? Well, I don't know if my mailman wants to kill anyone, but he seems to like knocking at my door really hard when he drops large pieces of junk mail in front of it when they won't fit in the little mailbox because he already crammed any smaller packages in there so their contents are crushed to a fine power by the time I forcibly rip them out. He also enjoys pushing the cart as hard as he can and letting it hit the curb on the other side of the street, spilling everyone's mail.

Anyhow, it's not the mailman. It's a short, stocky Hispanic woman and a tall Hispanic man. The man asks, "Are you Bill?" I'm like, "Uh, yeah."

"My name is Ricardo and this is Consuelo, this is a photo of her son, Miguel." He shows me an aged wedding photo from the 70s.

"She asked me to come and tell you that you have taken Miguel's phone number, and she wants you to give it back."

After five more minutes of completely uncomfortable conversation with this gentleman, with the woman chiming in with angry Spanish, and not to mention that I was in my underwear, I got rid of them. I called fucking Verizon, and gave them complete hell. The guy was actually nice, and an hour later he called me to let me know he talked to Consuelo in Spanish and told her what Miguel's phone number actually was.

Anyhow, I really hate Verizon; about three years ago I ordered a DSL line. At the time Verizon didn't offer DSL. I really didn't want to use Verizon for anything anyway considering it took them ten years to replace the faulty cable that hooked my building into the phone pole. Every time it would rain everyone's phone would dim and they'd come up the next day and put more electrical tape on it. Anyhow, when ya get a DSL line from another carrier, Verizon still owns the wire from the pole to your apartment, so they don't let the DSL company install it and instead charge them to send their horrible labor force. So after 45 "technicians" came to hook me up, this li'l guido (a mini-me guido, if you will) phone tech looks at the flyers on my wall (most of em are Bugout Society and Shemps flyers), and says, "Ay, are you in a baahnd? I play in a baahnd. We played a benefit for Black Bears last week."

I said, "What, a benefit for big hairy black gay guys?" He got very offended and needless to say, my internet line did not get up and running that day.

OK, the final incident, which I totally forgot about, had to do with how cool my boss is. I edit about 100 to 150 wedding videos a year. A couple of years ago I had a good system going where I would work on your video and send you the finished copies, but I'd save a digital backup for about six months just in case you didn't like something and I had to fix it. So I worked for four or five days on this couple's wedding and I shipped it off to DC. About a year later, he decided that there were five stupid little things he wanted changed. I was pretty miffed when I got the tapes back since I had already erased the backup. So I took the tapes and stuck them on the shelf thinking, "Fuck this guy, I'll let him wait a couple of weeks before I get to make his tape lose a generation of quality."

I placed a note on it that said "Fatass Levinstein;" Mr. Levinstein sorta looked like Newman from *Seinfeld*, but about four times the size. So a couple of weeks later I ran his crummy looking VHS tapes back into my computer and ran him off crummier looking VHS copies with his three little things fixed. Unfortunately, the post-it note did a *Cape Fear* tactic on me and stuck itself to the bottom of one of the video boxes and when Fatass Levinstein got the tapes, he was mad as hell—he was ready to pop like a 400-pound grape!

My boss called me up and told me what was going on. She just said to him, "So, what's the problem, is the tape alright now?" Anyhow I guess now he was complaining about something else (I suspect that he only originally complained about his tape because he got charged extra to airbrush his wife's face so she would stop looking like a corpse, maybe if she didn't have some 400-pound lawyer getting on top of her every night and performing some strange sort of auto-erotic asphyxiation, she wouldn't have these problems). A lot of the people I do editing for seem to like to complain to get back for the feeling that they aren't getting a good deal.

The same sort of person likes to order everything specially made at restaurants. I really hate that. If you order a Sweet Lassi and ask them to not make it too sweet, I really want to punch you in your fat face and I'm sure the waiter and the chef would like to as well, but will make sure they counter that sweetness in the drink with some saliva or urine for ya! My dad and I had a conversation about this and he said that if you order something that's not on the menu and the restaurant obliges, they have the right to charge you whatever the hell they feel like.

Oh, OK, back to Fatass Levinstein. The best part of this story is my boss—although I was sorta fucked up by inadvertently humiliating the customer, after I fixed the tape a second time, she insisted on "taking a look at it" before I shipped it back to chubsy-ubsy. The tapes sat under her desk for over a year. Chubby called a few times, but she never got to it, so he brought a small claims suit up against her. During the trial he actually put the post-it on an overhead and made it blow up to almost the size of him. My boss said to the judge, "Well, although I admit it is very rude of Bill to call him a name, we actually videotaped more than one Levinstein that year and he actually needed to differentiate between the two. And if Mr. Levinstein is really offended, he should look in a mirror." The judge made us give him something like $500 back, which actually saved us money because I really didn't want to re-edit his whole video and look at his fat ass for another week. OK, email me sometime Fatass! bill@candids.com or www.theshemps.com

This past month, our esteemed Senate passed the controversial Homeland Security Act, a wonderful bill that gives the government all kinds of new powers of surveillance over its own citizens. While this is indeed a moment for US citizens (and political activists in particular) to start getting frightened, it was not the details of their data gathering means (or the sound of numerous rights to privacy going loudly down the drain) that caught my attention. What was interesting to me is what was slyly tucked away in this bill—a provision protecting pharmaceutical companies from lawsuits.

What exactly does that have to do fighting terrorism? Good question. The answer is nothing. But let's back up a little bit…

At the center of this topic is a chemical called thimerosal, which is a mercury-based preservative that's been used for decades in vaccines given to infants. Only a few short years ago, the dangers of thimerosal were realized and the government demanded that pharmaceutical companies cease using it. (Why it took that long to discover the dangers of a chemical containing mercury, a known poison, is beyond me, but that's a discussion for another time.) Since then, research has come up with

other disorders) in children. Consequently, lawsuits have popped up against pharmaceutical companies (most specifically against Eli Lilly, the developer of thimerosal and many other fine medicines, such as Prozac) all over the place, with parents demanding reparations for damage caused to their children from thimerosal.

So, tucked away in the Homeland Security Act is a provision that protects big drug makers from any lawsuits that come forth regarding thimerosal (45 of which are currently in the works). This provides incredible security to the tune of millions of dollars to these companies, and most of this security goes directly to Eli Lilly. So, again, what does any of this have to do with terrorism? It's difficult to say, especially since no one appears to know how or why this provision was included in the first place. Eli Lilly was (or was pretending to be) the most surprised, claiming that they had never even lobbied for such a law, much less asked for it to be included in the Homeland Security Act. Democrats, and even a few Republicans, also flipped out when they learned of its addition. John McCain, one of the more intelligent (or should we say "less stupid") Republicans in Congress, was among the most angered, saying, "it has no bearing whatsoever on domestic security." When the GOP was questioned, they claimed that no one knew how the provision got there, but were somehow able to explain that its purpose was to "give more legal protection to vaccine-makers who might be called upon in the terror war." Richard Diamond, the spokesman for majority leader Dick Armey, had the most informative answer for reporters, saying that the provision was inserted because "it was something the White House wanted." Something the White House wanted? OK, now we're getting somewhere.

In the national elections last month, pharmaceutical companies gave a total of $19.1 million dollars to candidates, more than any other industry. The most given by any one company was the $1.6 million dollars given by (ta-da!) Eli Lilly. Oddly enough, 73% of this cash went to Republican candidates. But the connections between the big druggies and the White House don't end there.

A former Eli Lilly top dog, Mitch Daniels, now serves as the White House budget director. Better still, Eli Lilly's current CEO, President, and Chairman, Sidney Taurel, was appointed by George Bush last year to serve on the president's Homeland Security Advisory Council. So, let's get this all straight: the CEO of a large drug manufacturer that donated a boatload of money to Republican candidates gets a seat on the Homeland Security Advisory Board and the CEO's company gets a sudden multi-million dollar protection from the Homeland Security Act, and no one seems to know where it came from? How strange...

But asides from further diluting citizens' rights, Eli Lilly has been in the news for other reasons of late. First and foremost, their stock prices have been soaring in the past few weeks. This is assumedly due to 1) everything that I just mentioned, and 2) the recent approval by the FDA of two brand new drugs. One of these drugs, Strattera, is a new over-the-counter medication for ADD (or ADHD, as it's apparently now known as). Research on this new wonder drug led me straight to the Eli Lilly website, where there was a large article about it. The phrase "wonder drug" took on a whole new meaning when I found this gem in the part of the article dealing with the scientific processes of Strattera: "It is not known precisely how Strattera reduces ADHD symptoms." Well I, for one, am happy to see that the FDA is not letting minor details, like how a drug functions, get in the way of their new swift-approval process.

Which leads to the other news Eli Lilly has been making. Just a few days ago, they settled a lawsuit brought against them by a husband and wife in Pennsylvania. They claimed that Prozac was responsible for the wife's suicidal thoughts that culminated in her slashing her wrists and overdosing on painkillers, leaving her mentally impaired and paralyzed on one side of her body. Of course, the out-of-court settlement for an undisclosed amount (they were seeking $4.84 million) allows Eli Lilly to remain free of any official guilt. But interestingly enough, a new lawsuit was brought against them this week, claiming that some people are poor metabolizers of Prozac and that a simple test can judge whether any given person is in that category or not. Being a "poor metabolizer" doesn't sound like its such a big deal, but what it translates to for these folks is a build-up of Prozac's active ingredient, which makes them overly susceptible to violence and suicide. The suit is being brought up by a Georgia man whose 63-year-old wife shot and killed herself in 2000, a mere 11 days after starting to take Prozac. It is claimed in the suit that Eli Lilly "is negligent in failing to make this information public, to convey it to doctors, or otherwise to take reasonable measures to implement appropriate patient screening techniques."

Lest you begin to think that I'm singling Eli Lilly out here, let me remind you that they're just one of a handful of thugs in the drug industry (like Merck, Pfizer, Novartis, Bristol Myers Squibb, Bayer, etc.) that are making a killing (pun strategically intended) with their pills. Currently, they comprise the single most profitable industry in the world (although you're probably not doing too bad at the moment if your business has anything to do with military equipment or oil either).

But the pharmaceutical industry offers a taxing (will I ever stop?) conundrum for the more anti-corporate inclined amongst us. Like it or not, these huge bastards have been known to do the world some good on occasion. In the past, they've developed an array of vaccines, medicines, and treatments that have helped millions of people with once deadly (or at least debilitating) inflictions regain their health and lead *normal* lives. Unlike many of the companies that I like to rail on in this column whose products or services are completely unnecessary, or whose benefits to society are far outweighed by the amount of damage they inflict upon it in other ways, drug manufacturers actually perform a vital service to humanity.

But just because somebody serves an integral service to society doesn't mean we have to rally around them. Today's pharmaceutical companies are wreaking havoc on us in plenty of ways. They circumvent our political processes in every fashion imaginable, they overdose our society with a vast amount of useless drugs that cause more problems than they solve, and they even withhold life-saving medications from those who need it most, in some cases. And drug companies are producing just as many symptoms as they are treatments these days (and I don't just mean the headaches they cause by having to put up with their shit either). Whether its Seasonal Affective Disorder or ADD (excuse me...ADHD), they are now in the business of taking normal human quirks, giving them a scary disease-sounding names, and conveniently providing the pills that cure them (or better yet, keep the "symptoms" at bay if you take one or two a day). This is not to say that I think you're being deceived if your doctor diagnosed you with a mental condition and you're currently taking sixty different pills that genuinely improve your condition. These cases exist and I'm glad that people are getting the opportunity to deal with them. But I've talked to way more people that have dropped their pill regiments and found themselves better off than the other way around, which says to me that these drugs are being over-prescribed, a problem that curiously puts a ton of money in the pockets of the pharmaceutical giants.

So, what do we do then? How do we go about making sure that we don't give our support to drug companies we hate but still support the notion that there are many illnesses out there that we direly need research, development, and treatment for? Well, as awful as some folks would suggest I am for even mentioning it, I would throw your support behind the idea of universal health care. Yes, it's somewhat socialist, not to mention highly unlikely to happen in the US anytime soon, but it seems a lot more rational than leaving it up to an industry that's foremost thoughts are "profit, profit, profit!" Of course, we could revert back to the centuries-old tactic of simply not fighting diseases at all and letting nature run its course, but you can expect that idea to dip in popularity as soon as the first black plague hits. Universal health care, if properly structured, could solve plenty of the problems associated with our current (lack of) health care system, not the least of which would mean that everyone can receive treatment, not just those that can afford it.

Or perhaps Eli Lilly & Friends will just make it easier on everyone and develop a pill that can help us put up with them. That'd be a nice touch.

* * *

1. I'd like to thank WEAVING THE DEATHBAG for putting the "giving" back in Thanksgiving last week ("giving" referring to a swift hardcore assault upside the head in this case). If only

they could play a bit faster...
2. Here's an address you can use in case you want to send me hate mail, love letters, or free pill samples (oh yeah...or your zine): Rainbow Bookstore Cooperative, 426 W. Gilman St., Madison, WI 53703.

The fiscal year for the collective conscience began in October of 2001. I was in Brooklyn (just visiting, I swear) and called up a friend.

"Hey man, what are you doing? Do you feel like making some food or something?"

"Uh..are you listening to the radio?"

"No, why would I be doing that?" Although by the way he just said,"the radio" and not a particular station, I knew things could only go downhill from there.

"We're bombing Afghanistan."

Fuck. The dreaded "we". As if on cue, someone walked into the house with a copy of the New York Post, the coarsest toilet paper on the market. The cover screamed "LOCKDOWN!!!GIULIANI REVEALS SECRET PLAN TO SECURE NEW YORK"* With that, I called my ride and made plans to split back to Providence before we got locked into New York and the inevitable cannibalism began.

First, we went to a Hasidic street fair in Bushwick and ate ice cream**.

The last 13 months of spiraling downward has been as unsavory as salted hog marrow and as predictable as the nimrod who quickly checks the ground behind himself upon stumbling on a crack in the pavement. I marvel at each progressive step towards a war that everyone I come into contact with seems to be wholly against. Yet I know so very few of my fellow inscrutable Americans (*North American that is, not South American, not Native American...*), so I don't really know who these people are that are scooting us nearer and nearer the edge of the seat, nearer the spill into the aisle, nearer a bus full of mocking laughter.

In my short life and mind-numbing studies, I've never seen as much damaging change instigated by a single elected official, even the President. A President WHO WAS NOT EVEN FUCKING ELECTED.

Watching his progress in office has been like seeing the unmade sequel of *The Omen:* a former criminal and President as Satan himself; an invisible vice president as the protective nanny, making it all happen behind the scenes; an all-star cast of sellout union reps lining the stage as Bush signs another coffin nail piece of legislation. My analogy is weak, for this I apologize. My thesis remains: If ex-admiral John Poindexter, who is a five-time convicted federal criminal, is still currently employed by the Bush administration and on the verge of being awarded three million dollars to create a system of tracking the financial comings and goings of EVERY US CITIZEN, then things are very, very bad.

I'm telling you nothing new. Yet, what's up? Did you vote last month? Are you even registered? Do you have ideas for public resistance? Are you ready to head for the hills? Destroy your right arm with a staple gun to become undraftable? What can we do? I'm asking you because I don't know.

I'm in the library right now, where outside the ground is covered in four inches of snow. In one of the public conference areas next room over, Mayor Ciccilini's transition team is meeting, while across town, former Mayor Cianci is enjoying his last night in Providence before being shipped off to jail tomorrow. I'll take the bus home at 8 pm and sit down to dinner with all my housemates afterwards. Then, there's talk of stapling formica panels to cardboard for sledding fun. Under it all is a constant trembling, like waiting with your hand on the reciever for that call that's supposed to come long after your parents have gone to bed...the frailty and terror...the bells tolling in the distance, tanks moving in, bases on the periphery open one by one. We can only watch it on TV, make another bowl of popcorn and await the first of the air strikes to light up the screen like Dick Clark's big apple over The Big Apple—our own private benevolent bomb dropping good tidings over the best, freest nation on God's earth.

*If I weren't typing this on deadline, I would go back and double check the wording. It's close, but I can't promise the last third of the sentence is exact. Besides, shut up.
**Not real ice cream. I don't support that shit, dude.

The ideal of the rebel is one which permeates every aspect of American society. Even within corporate culture, the rebel within—the business maverick—is held up as a hero.

Turn to the world of advertising and it is impossible to escape the rebel image. From edgy x-games styled commercials to punk and gangsta rapper hucksters, the rebel is the cool.

And then there is the "through being cool" school of cool. This variant of cool is also based on rebellion. What these cools are rebelling against is whatever the current brand of rebellion is currently being cooped by the rebels of the mainstream.

As I write this the accepted cool is punky, pouty and pathological. And the cool anti-cool is straight-laced and studious. In other words, there is rebel rebel cool and rebel nerd cool. And, of course, there are many shades of cool in between. All of these cools are rebels and all of the rebels have rules which you must abide by in order to be cool.

"Rules to rebellion? Soriano, you surely jest!" Nope. Since the 1950s, the rebel in American society has become collectivized. That is, as much as we hold up the picture of the individual against the world as the icon of rebellion (James Dean is the usual icon; in punkdom, Sid Vicious or GG Allin), the truth is the rebel is not individual but, at best, the chief of a "rebel" tribe. With the tribes comes rules and mores and a system that enforces those rules. In tribal society, the simplest punishment for going against the tribe is banishment. Today, that means getting your cool card taken away.

To anyone who has spent any time in America's subculture, the notion that rebels have rules is no revelation. Hang out with a group of anarchists and you will find that there are more rules to being an anarchist than there are for being an accountant. Among the uber-rebels of punk rock and gangsta rap the rules of dress and conduct are stifling—they have to be: adherence to a subculture's rules is what makes one a member of that subculture. Additionally, unless you adhere to all the rules of the subculture you inhabit, you will not find success within that subculture. In other words, stray from the tribe and you will be accused of selling out.

The more underground you go into a subculture, the more rules you encounter and the more poison the venom to those who stray. Find me a vegan, anarchist, feminist, anti-imperialist hardcore punk rocker who fails the tribe and I will show you one very unhappy camper. I will also show you one very small tribe, a tribe that is powerless in society and has to lord over its members in order to gain some sense of power and importance.

Lest you think I have it in for vegan, anarchist, feminist, hardcore punk rockers, turn your gaze toward to the world of vegan, anti-abortion, straight edge hardcore punk rockers. Or beer-drinkin', porno-lovin', anti-PC bar punk rockers. Or anti-imperialist, Black power hip hoppers. Or proto-fascist, trench-coat wearing noise geeks. Or baggy pants, punk jump, backward baseball hat male revues. A thousand little tribes, each one full of rebels, rebels against rebellion and the rebels of the status quo.

To long time readers of *Maximumrocknroll*, it might seem a bit ironic that this screed is running in this rag. After all, one of the chief ideologues of punk rock tribalism, one of the people most responsible for giving punk a firm set of rules was this rag's founder, Tim Yo. I think, at first, no one noticed or cared what Tim thought about punk rock. He helped found a great radio show and then an international punk zine.

Who would have thought that the zine would have the influence that it did? Not only did Tim Yo's *MRR* create a firm set of rules for punk, it brought into existence several groups of people who rebelled against those rules. How did they rebel? By creating sets of rules themselves and viciously patrolling the corridors of punk rock for *MRR*-styled rebels. When 1984 finally arrived, punk rock was full of hall monitors.

It gets wackier. While more and more people were getting anal over other's politics or lack thereof, what constituted punk musically was expanding. On one side, the hardcore/metal crossover brought punk a whole new crowd of people and, for better or worse, pushed punk into an area it had previously rejected: musicianship.

Actually, that is only partially true. The rock'n'roll mainstream's rap that punk rockers couldn't play their instruments has always been a half truth. Sure there were bands like the Prats, teens who just picked up instruments for the first time. But there were also people like Rat Scabies and Chuck Biscuits who pretty much blew away most rock drummers. The notion that punks could not write anything but a basic verse-chorus song was also absurd. Plenty of bands, from PiL to Kleenex to the Minutemen, experimented with song structure. In fact, there was more going on in punk that challenged the concepts of song writing and required a high level of musical understanding than its critics ever admitted. What there was not, however, was the idea that punk meant musicianship. Enter crossover.

With crossover, the guitar hero entered punk. Perhaps the guitar hero never entered in name, but the idea that you could be a hot shit guitarist and play punk made it acceptable for hot shit guitarists to play punk. Part of being a hot shit guitarist is showing off your stuff. You can either show off by playing high speed solos or by writing songs in which the song structures are so convoluted that only a hot shit guitar player can play them, i.e. math rock or prog punk.

On the other side there were people who very much understood that punk meant musicianship, but not in the way that say *Guitar Player* or *Musician* magazines meant it. These folks understood that the roots of punk stretched far beyond the Sex Pistols and the Ramones, that music genres such as free jazz, psychedelia, and krautrock were just as responsible for punk rock as teen garage bands. This was the punk rock that revolved around labels such as Touch & Go and Homestead. Bands such as Big Black, the Minutemen, Savage Republic, and Sonic Youth sought to expand the musical idea of punk.

Both the avant punkers and the crossover crowd created a punk rock that was sufficiently large and appealing that a band such as Nirvana was able to be the first or second biggest rock-'n roll band of the era. (The only band to challenge Nirvana's popularity was U2, an act that also had its roots in punk.) Come 1990 and what was punk musically could be anything that was in the "alternative world."

The tribes attacked furiously. All of a sudden the notion that you could not be punk and be on a major record label was rule number one—even though the major punk bands of the '77 wave were all major label bands. This rule didn't just come from the "politically correct" camp but was nearly universal. *MRR* put this rule into print in the now infamous (and pretty damn accurate) "major label" issue. There were punk bands who thumbed their noses at the anti-corporate punkers (I remember the generic pop-punk band Face to Face signing to a major with the brag that they were going to do a "Sex Pistols" to the majors. Yeah, uh huh) and many more bands whose ambition was more than apparent.

While those within punk rock debated the merits of major labels, the majors stalked the ambitious. Aging punkers were hired by majors to scout young alt/punk bands (much as majors in the 60s had their "house hippies"). College radio changed from a free form nation to a group of stations that had play lists as strict as mainstream stations, yet full of alt product instead of MOR goop. The more the majors dove into punk, the more the public heard of punk and the more the public craved punk. By 1992, everything from Pearl Jam to D Generation was considered punk and bought by the mainstream.

Back in the underground, what was punk was pretty much anything that was "alternative" that was not tainted by a major label. At last, the philosophical ideologues were in control of punk. So powerful was this sentiment that bands were almost forced to make public pronouncements on why major labels sucked and how they would never sign. Not that these proclamations meant anything. For many, the chance of being approached by a major was nil. And those who often screamed the loudest about their loyalty to the cause (Jawbreaker and Chumbawamba come to mind) jumped when the offers were good enough. Still, the dividing line between what was punk and what was not was now 100% ideological.

Backing up this philosophy were not only thousands of bands, but, more important, a whole host of institutions. Independent record labels, zines, promoters, booking agents, distributors, printers, record stores, and even cafes created a network that enabled anti-corporate bands to not only exist but to make a living. Finally, after more than a decade of hardcore punk, there was what seemed to be a community, what the Wobblies of old would have called a "society of the new within the shell of the old." In this new society, garage rockers partied with crusty punks, twee poppers were neighbors with shoegazers, pit mongers prayed with prog punkers.

However, in every Eden there is a snake, and in this paradise the snake took the form of those who rejected a musically inclusive punk rock. They asked, "How can a band that sounds exactly like a mainstream band like Pearl Jam but is a proud indie band still be a punk band?"

It might seem ironic that the main voice asking this question was the one voice sung loudest in the anti-corporate choir: *Maximumrocknroll*. One would think that having won the ideological battle, *MRR* would have been content. One would think...however, hang around control freaks long enough and you will find that every conquest is a signal to start another campaign. Like a little Jenguiz Kahn, the control freak seeks to spread his rule further and further, even going so far to find reasons to extend his rule when there really aren't any reasons there.

So with the stroke of a pen, *MRR* declared that there was not just an ideological component to punk rock but that there was a musical one as well. Overnight, bands that were once considered punk were banished to "indie." A genre that had tossed musical restriction for a musically inclusive view of punk was now just another set of rules. (Please note that what *MRR* considered punk and not punk had as much to do with power as it did with one person's musical prejudice or what punk was in 1983. Fugazi was considered a punk band but bands who sounded exactly like our heroes from DC were not.) A few years after the punk purge, *MRR* founder Tim Yo went at his record collection, now the MRR archive, and tossed out anything he considered "not punk." Those who snapped up the shunned records scratched their heads at Tim's logic. Others snapped to, mocking anything that fell outside the narrow world bracketed by the Ramones and Napalm Death.

Since *Maximumrocknroll* is a private institution (while Tim Yo was alive, an institution headed by one person), the actions that the institution takes are pretty much up to the institution. The argument that "If you don't like it, do it yourself" is valid. However, when an institution has as much influence as *MRR* has/had it is ridiculous to think that its actions and proclamations mean nothing. When the biggest independent punk magazine lays down a set of rules, those rules mean something. One can obey the rules or ignore them, the rules are there and compliance or lack of has its ramifications.

The thing that sets *MRR* apart from others who have power is that *MRR* has never shied away from the fact that it has both influence and a set of ideologically inspired rules. While *MRR*'s current overlords might not be as ideologically anal as the rag's founder, they still have a set of guidelines that they adhere to. They also have a notion of what punk is. Part of this notion is based on their personal and political philosophies, part on their tastes, and part on the history of the magazine. And it is all pretty apparent to anyone who spends 15 minutes looking at the rag. That being the case, *MRR* is still chief of a tribe, a tribe based on rebellion in a society which preaches rebellion as is the ultimate in cool. To be *MRR* is to be cool. To be against *MRR* is to be cool. To be against those who are against *MRR* is to be cool. Rebels, rebels everywhere!

The position that *Maximumrocknroll* is in right now is pretty interesting. As king of the ideological punk poop pile it has to contend with a world where, stylistically, punk rules. Not only

is the mainstream punk style the same one which *MRR* espoused, but the dream every 15-year-old punker had in 1980 is reality. Not only can one turn on the radio and hear punk rock, the television uses punk rock in commercials. Not only can you walk down the street with a mohawk and not get fucked with, punk fashion is almost passé. Punk rock has gone beyond being accepted in rock'n'roll. It is now, according to mainstream rock scribes, the savior of rock'n'roll. In musical terms, that means punk rock is Moses or Jesus Christ or Mohammed or Jah or whatever one-true-god you believe in.

Meanwhile, the institutions that enabled punk to reach the level of acceptance that it now has—the network of independent projects—are being destroyed. Those who came off as die-hard indie ideologues such as Mordam Records have decided that perhaps major labels aren't that bad and all that anti-major label stuff they once spouted is just kid's stuff. Small time indie promoters have either quit or been bought off. Venues around the country are in the hands of major corporations like Clear. The big indie label is more and more a thing of the past. As the economy tightens, pressures for indies to conform to the world of corporate America becomes heavier.

In this punk new world, it is important to ask what makes rebellion? Is it style? Is it politics? Is a commitment to a set of principles? What makes the rebel kind? If rebel culture can be coopted so easily, how rebellious is it really? Or, maybe, we need to ask ourselves whether or not rebellion means anything at all? Is rebellion irrelevant in a society that holds the rebel up as the highest expression of cool? If being cool is what it means to be embraced by the status quo, what is the use in striking the rebel pose? If rebellion requires rules, can you rebel against the rebel rules and still be a rebel? A rebel rebel? Identity? Reality? Rebellion?

•••

No, I won't answer your questions. You can contact me at scotts@sl.net. Want to send me stuff? Scott Soriano, 1114 21st Street, Sacramento, CA 95814 USA. Please refrain from sending me your tour schedules, radio playlists, or other junk.

No.

Stanley had a microchip planted right behind his little Chihuahua ear. This chip had several purposes, one of which (and the only one known to his owner) was to serve as a tracking and identification system, sort of a UPC symbol with an added homing beacon. The other purposes were considerably more complex. When the chip was implanted in Stanley, THE MAN was aware that cuteness would be the most effective method of drawing the average citizen in for their own "modifications". The unwitting participants in these "procedures" were rarely aware of the changes to their physiology, even in hindsight, due to advanced retinal-imaging and amnesia-inducing technologies developed by THE MAN's scientists at great expense and over long periods of time. In short, Stanley was a tool. An unwitting tool, but a tool nonetheless. Stanley has been the downfall of us all, intellectual anarchist and drunken fool alike.

"Stanley! You're so CUTE! Where are you taking me? Down the street? Something's strange with this...What's this van, Stanley? You want me to open the back? Wait...Who are you?" <Stun Gun noises><unconscious body falls>. "Ohhh...my head...How did I get back home? Stanley? Stop licking my face, Stanley. Uggg...I'm going to bed."

The person you overheard in this last exchange now has an almost undetectable, unbelievably complex computer chip implanted behind her left ear. This chip will transmit every thought and action she ever performs, in pure data stream, to a highly secretive government information bank. This information will then be used against her and her entire cohort when the time is nigh. You are next. Cuteness kills.

This makes no sense, you say? Silly? Rambling? Pointless? Our government is establishing a department called "Total Information Awareness", dedicated to gathering all information possible on EVERY SINGLE CITIZEN OF THE UNITED STATES. The symbol of this new department is A HUGE FUCKING PYRAMID, much like the one on the back of the dollar bill, WITH A GIANT EYE ON TOP WHICH IS BEAMING A BROAD RAY OF LIGHT UPON THE ENTIRE PLANET EARTH. "Total Information Awareness". Did you get that? It is called "TOTAL INFORMATION AWARENESS". This is for real. Perhaps the only logical response to this sort of complete, totalitarian insanity is to CONFUSE THE LIVING SHIT out of our now godlike, omnipotent governmental overlords.

Avgalhlkj!uohg <hhgddghasghNsdf!@$@!R#$^^#$DBDSB SDAGDFDS#$^*&^IUY":MJNBMLDPFGLSD{""SAasmjislnA M<!@#324@$#5!@!@$erDGFFSBHDTYijk34^^*&^*erYGdrf@#$!@#!@%$^%$^#$@!!!!

It's all CODE! Now, a secret army of AXIS OF EVILDOERS is going to march, at a secret command, to TAKE YOU ALL OUT, MR. MAN, ONE BY ONE, whether you're hiding in a hollowed out mountain, space, or a fucking nasty high-tech cave of your own. Take that, you SELF-RIGHTEOUS, TRULY EVIL MOTHERFUCKERS!

"Total Information Awareness." Satire is truly dead.

—Johnny Information Overlord, PO Box 3026, Oakland, CA 94609

"War is the health of the state."
—Randolph Bourne, *The State*

"I spent 33 years and 4 months in active service in the country's most agile military force, the Marines. I served in all ranks from second lieutenant to major general. And during that period I spent most of my time being a high-class muscle man for Big Business, for Wall Street and the bankers. In short, I was a racketeer, a gangster for capitalism.

I suspected I was just part of a racket at the time. Now I am sure of it. Like all members of the military profession I never had an original thought until I left the service. My mental faculties remained in suspended animation while I obeyed the orders of the higher-ups. This is typical with everyone in the military service.

Thus I helped make Mexico, and especially Tampico, safe for American oil interests in 1914. I helped make Haiti and Cuba a decent place for the National City Bank boys to collect revenue in. I helped in the raping of half-a-dozen Central American republics for the benefit of Wall Street. The record of racketeering is long. I helped purify Nicaragua for the international banking house of Brown Brothers and Co. in 1909-1912. I brought light to the Dominican Republic for the sugar interests in 1916. I helped make Honduras "right" for American fruit companies in 1903. In China in 1927 I helped see to it that Standard Oil went its way unmolested.

During those years, I had, as the boys in the back room would say, a swell racket. I was rewarded with honors, medals, and promotion. Looking back on it, I feel that I might have given Al Capone a few hints. The best he could do was to operate a racket in three city districts. The Marines operated on three continents."

—Maj. Gen. Smedley Butler (former Commandant, US Marine Corps), *Common Sense*, November 1935

"Why of course the people don't want war. Why should some poor slob on a farm want to risk his life in a war when the best he can get out of it is to come back to his farm in one piece? Naturally the common people don't want war, neither in Russia, nor in England, nor for that matter in Germany. That is understood. But, after all, it is the leaders of the country who determine the policy and it is always a simple matter to drag the people along, whether it is a democracy, or a fascist dictatorship, or a parliament, or a communist dictatorship. Voice or no voice, the people can always be brought to the bidding of the leaders. That is easy. All you have to do is tell them

they are being attacked, and denounce the peacemakers for lack of patriotism and exposing the country to danger. It works the same in any country."
—attributed to Hermann Goering

"No war but the class war."
—slogan of Class War Federation

TOWARD A MAXIMUM ANTI-WAR MOVEMENT

Are you outraged with the US government's arrogant practice of policing the rest of the world, yet are you leery of having your outrage exploited by obsolete Leftists for their own bankrupt agendas? Are you pissed off that the US military is once again bullying tiny Third World countries and preparing to slaughter innocent civilians, yet are you hesitant to give any credibility to the Paleolithic Left's claims to leading a mass anti-war movement? Are you disgusted with America's imperial business-as-usual, yet are you also bored to tears with the Left's protest-politics-as-usual? There's a simple, do-it-yourself alternative that effectively challenges the US government's military adventurism while denying the fossilized Left its organizing and leadership pretensions. This strategy is based on the idea that thousands of grains of sand can cause even the largest, most powerful machine to grind to a halt by becoming wedged in the gears and stuck between sensitive parts to gum up the works. The goal of this alternative strategy is to put our anti-war activism and movement to maximum effect.

MAXIMUM SELF-ORGANIZATION

Forget about joining that PC Leftist organization. Instead, get together with friends who oppose US foreign policy and are willing to do something about it. This small informal group of friends can be located in your work, school or community and should have some experience doing things together. At the very least the small group can act as a backup when you attend those tired old anti-war demonstrations, with friends watching each other's backs in case of trouble from police or counter demonstrators and with the group easily able to take advantage of spontaneous breakaway actions from the staid main demo. Ideally, the small group can also act on its own in ways more creative than the Left's tedious, predictable dog-and-pony shows. Sit down with your friends and decide what you want to do as well as where, when and how you want to do it. Gather the supplies and resources you need to accomplish your action, practice if you need to, then just do it.

MAXIMUM PROTEST

The Left's range of protest—from timid letter writing to boring march-and-rally—rarely challenges established routines, transcends proper channels or takes on official authority. More often than not, Leftist protest acts to legitimize the Left itself with the carefully crafted façade of mass participation that remains firmly under Leftist control. By contrast, small groups of friends can infiltrate protest into every sphere of society in ways that emphasize its disruptive possibilities. On the job or in the streets, in schools or within government bureaucracies small groups of friends can deliver popular outrage through talking to fellow workers and bulletin board postings, anonymous e-mail broadcasts and wearing black armbands, leaflets left in strategic places and speaking up to superiors, banners strung from buildings and personally decorated work stations, etc. the ways to protest are legion.

MAXIMUM RESISTANCE

Aside from armed resistance, the Left condescendingly labels most forms of resistance moralistic and individualistic. Yet not being a "good German" and going along with the schemes of the powers-that-be can be a powerful political act that goes beyond inspiration and "organizing by example." Boycotting corporate military contractors, refusing to register for the draft or pay war taxes, disobeying orders as munitions workers or soldiers, not cooperating with government civil defense or popular mobilization measures can be organized collectively to have a strong social effect. Small groups of friends can encourage, publicize, support or carry out resistance, propagating forms of refusal on more and more levels of society until resistance becomes a social force in its own right.

MAXIMUM DIRECT ACTION

The Left capitalizes on the misery of the people it claims to fight for, hoping to act as powerbroker between "the masses" and the powers-that-be. Little wonder that these misery pimps steer clear of direct action that is nothing less than folks taking matters into their own hands. Shutting down military recruiters by chaining the doors and gluing the locks. Destroying military files and records with fake blood or homemade napalm. Infecting government computer systems with destructive software viruses. Mobile sit-ins and blockades that disperse when the police arrive, only to reassemble at the next intersection or government building. On-the-job slowdowns, sick-ins and sabotage to stop war production. Small groups of friends are ideal for implementing and spreading direct action.

MAXIMUM TAKEOVER

The last thing the Left wants is for "the people" to take power on their own, without the Left's "leadership." The act of takeover in turn is the practice of taking power on a small scale to create temporary liberated zones. When marching demonstrators seize the streets and transform them into an open-air university or a wild-in-the-streets block party, that's takeover. When folks occupy the empty lots in their community to build playgrounds for their kids or cultivate gardens to feed the homeless, that's takeover. When people occupy government buildings and convert them to daycare centers or infoshops, that's takeover. Small groups of friends can be the center of such takeovers and can also provide for the organization of such temporary liberated zones.

MAXIMUM SELF-GOVERNMENT

The Left's preferred forms of organization are political parties and trade unions, both of which substitute for direct social power. Compare this to the small group of friends that serves as the basic element of social power. Whether called a crew, collective, affinity group, cell, posse or revolutionary gang it can simultaneously allow for the internal development of cooperative non-hierarchical social relations and permit the external decentralized bottom-up organization of social power through association, federation and alliance. But the small group is neither a perfected final organizational form nor is it an end in itself. By creating a self-governing social power the proliferation of small groups concurrently makes society ungovernable at the base to the powers-that-be and opens up the potential for broader, more radical forms of self-activity, self-organization and self-government.

DON'T WAIT FOR INSTRUCTIONS!
DON'T ASK FOR PERMISSION!

Red Zone
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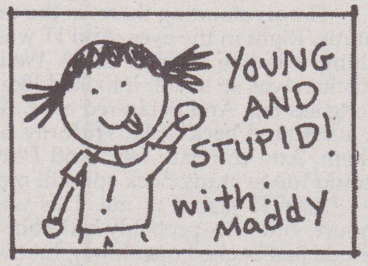
(Western pundits declared the United States the de facto victor of the "cold war" after the Soviet Union's collapse in 1991, proclaiming as well that there was now no viable economic alternative to market capitalism. Yet working people around the world continue to rise up against American hegemony and the power of capital. In Mexico, these rebellious regions are called "red zones" by the government which subjects their populations to low-intensity or counter-insurgency warfare.)

...ALL THE NEWS THAT FITS...

HISTORICAL NOTE...I briefly circulated Toward A Maximum Anti-War Movement (sans quotes) in flyer form locally six years ago, and am reprinting it now in MRR as something that still holds relevance for the reborn anti-war movement. Had I written it today, I would have approached things from a more class-oriented perspective, but hey I was bogged down writing my real column and this was a halfway decent, last minute substitute. The creative process is sometimes labored and not always on deadline. Besides, I've thrown a manifesto or two into this column in the past, so it's not at all out of line. Next month, I get back to, among other things, my recent trip to New York City, which continues to reverberate with me.

PERSONAL PROPAGANDA... You can find the "lost" Hooligan column at the new, improved http://www.huahuacoyotl.com. To find out my real name purchase my book, *End Time*, from AK Press (POB 40682, SF, CA 94140-0682) for $10. The book is called *Fim* in Portuguese and can be ordered from Conrad Editora (R. Maracaí, 185, Aclimação, 01534-030, São Paulo-SP, Brasil) for R$ 24,90. I can be contacted at hooligan3@mindspring.com.



Greetings *Maximum Rock and Roll* readers big and small, girls and boys, crusty and pop punk, up and down, back and forth! (Or, as we say in Wisconsin, Hellough! You know! Think Fargo!)

Its time to come clean! It's only my first column in *MRR* and I'm already gonna confess My Shockingly Unpunk Music History! (SUMH) I know, I know! I'm a SUMH! The shame! The horror! It was bad enough that I didn't own jeans until eighth grade, and that I once lost a best friend in fourth grade because I'd rather read than hang out with her! Oh the humility! Its worse than missing an AGAINST ME show! Or waiting a year for a new issue of *Cometbus!* Or discovering that you have a bug lodged in your ear! (Note: two of these three things have happened to me. The answer will shock you!)

Unlike the vast majority of punk rockers, I did not get into punk rock at the age of two. I know, I know, I was one of those super lame, untattooed babies who didn't even know the words to "Forming"! What were my parents thinking? They didn't even put me on *Star Search* to sing "London Calling"! Unpunk!

Instead, my early years were spent listening to…uh oh, grab onto your neighbor's tri-hawk for support and sit down…folk songs! My dad sung Russian folk songs all the time. (Think: lyrics involving toil, weariness, death, and ship wrecks. Repeat.). And my mom used to sing The Internationale to me as a lullaby. In French. Lest you think I was raised in some bizarre Communist cult where we had to do a hundred push-ups every day to prepare for the revolution or the Long March Part Two, I will add that my parents both voted for Dukakis.

As I advanced into my grade school years, I got super into such classic punk bands as the BEACH BOYS. My sister and I used to put my dad's old BEACH BOYS records on our Fisher Price record player and jump up and down, proving the truth of the MTX lyric, "Since the age of six or seven I was in my prime/Ever since that time it's been a steady decline." We would also listen to whatever was on the oldies station. (You know, the good 50s and 60s oldie station. No disco. I was lame, but I never got into disco. Or cocaine.)

After a few years of BEATLES, BEACH BOYS, and MONKEES (Yes, I did say MONKEES! Please direct all bad-mouthing of said band to: The Committee to Uphold Standards of Decency and Davy Jones, c/o Rev. Norb. He will stand up for what's right!), I began to enter what I call The Worst Stage of Human Development. The preteen stage! Eeck! What could be worse than suddenly developing the biological urge to get a spiral perm? My sister and I have an official agreement that, if we ever bear children, I will give her my kids between the ages of ten and fourteen. And she will give me her offspring between the ages of zero and two. (The only reason this plan might not work is because she has expressed a desire to perform random psychological experiments on her children, starting at an early age. Like refusing to give them a name. Or telling them that you count "One, Two, Eleven, Table." She thinks she may be satisfied with performing lesser experiments on hamsters (such as painting one orange and re-introducing it to its family to study the reaction of all hamster parties involved. I have a strange family).

Anyway, Maddy in the preteen stage was full of homemade perms, the wearing of a California Raisins t-shirt, and general attempts to pretend like I was someone other than a total weirdo who wrote a twenty-page-paper on the fall of the Soviet Union at the age of eleven. D'oh! So, in a failed attempt to mask my knowledge of the ComIntern, I purchased….the *Dirty Dancing* soundtrack! And I loved it! "Hungry Eyes" was my favorite song for several months. I memorized all the lyrics. But, somehow, I failed to become a totally hot, popular, first-in-line-for-pizza grade-schooler! What was wrong with me?

So, I bought albums by WILSON PHILLIPS, WHITNEY HOUSTON, MADONNA, PAULA ABDUL, and NEW KIDS ON THE BLOCK. This is where it got dangerous. My best friend at the time, a bang-hairspraying girl by the name of Gretchen (which, my sister never failed to point out, rhymes with wretchin'), was also really, really into this music. The problem was, this was music that you dance to. Or, you know, *someone* dances to. Preferably someone other than me.

But, in fifth grade, if you put on "Straight Up" by PAULA ABDUL and refused to dance, that was the rough equivalent of, I dunno, accidentally allowing some fascists to "Pasaran" right into Barcelona in 1936. So, Gretchen would put on PAULA ABDUL and start doing That Dance. You know, that strange PAULA ABDUL dance that involved coordinating your hands and legs in a weird formation that some might call dancing, but I called impossible. And I tried.

When I look back on my life, few moments seem as humiliating as those I spent in front of a mirror in my bedroom, with my big spiral perm and my snap bracelets on, trying to dance like PAULA ABDUL. Unsuccessfully.

So, I always tried to avoid dancing. I would change the subject. Suggest that we go outside. Or play Monopoly. As you can see, this, in the long run, only made me seem like more of a loser.

Finally, in eighth grade I discovered the band that would completely change the musical direction of my young life! Was it THE DESCENDENTS? BLACK FLAG? MINOR THREAT? SCREECHING WEASEL? Oh no. It was R.E.M. (Note: Please send all complaint letters to: Committee to Revoke Maddy's Punk Points (CRMPP). Expect a six to ten week wait. There's a heavy backlog still, from the time I confessed to liking the Disney movie *Aristocats*) Yes, I liked R.E.M. I loved R.E.M. I was obsessed with Michael Stipe. In fact, to this day, I think the only reason I got interested in the environmental movement was because Michael Stipe said that recycling was cool. Oh, the shame.

From there, it does get better. I found out about bands like NIRVANA and SMASHING PUMPKINS. (Wait, I promise. It *does* get better!) Then from those bands, I found out about SONIC YOUTH, BLACK FLAG, and the RAMONES.

At some point, I started taking guitar lessons with a heavy metal guy who had found Jesus. And Scientology. And Hinduism. Often at the same time. My sister took drum lessons from him, too, and in between the inspirational messages, we learned, well, nothing. Or close to nothing. And so we decided to start a band.

Now, I'm sure you all know the story. Group of kids can't play instruments. Group of kids start a band. Group of kids become the next GERMS. Or ADOLESCENTS. Or REPLACEMENTS. It seems that all someone has to do to start a classic punk band is possess a complete misunderstanding of their instrument of choice. Oh yeah, it helps to drink and do drugs. A lot.

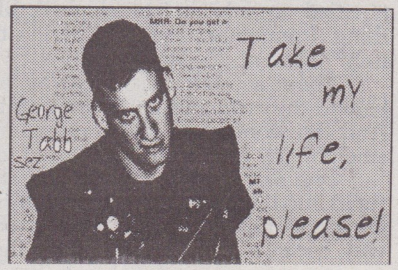
Somehow, for the first time in the history of punk rock, in a basement in Milwaukee, Wisconsin in 1994, this strategy failed. We did not write songs like "Jealous Again." We couldn't even cover the RAMONES. So, we did what any reasonable person would do: stick a butcher knife in the basement wall and never play music together again. (For the record, that *is* actually what happened.)

A few months after the dream of rock star celebrity had died, my hamster-torturing sister and I found a store that sold punk records. Score! So, we went there every few months, and bought whatever looked cool. MR. T EXPERIENCE, PANSY DIVISION, BIKINI KILL. Then one day we stumbled across the QUEERS. Since we enjoyed the ridiculosity of PANSY DIVISION, we thought, "Well, the QUEERS must be like that!" But when we took it home we were overjoyed, enthralled! This fucking rocked!

And then, in fifteen-year-old stupidity, I got into a debate with my sister about the QUEERS. "Their name is the QUEERS," I said. "They must be gay!" "No!" my sister shouted. "You're such an idiot! All of their songs are about girls!"

And so, I discovered punk rock.

I can be stalked at: 296A Nassau Ave. #3L, Brooklyn, NY 11222



So I'm in the bathroom, washing my face and brushing my teeth for probably the tenth time that day. Then my nose picks up that scent. That sweet scent. That sickeningly sweet scent. The smell of death. I almost puke.

"Nick," I yell to my

stepfather, "I think another rat died in the wall or under the tub."

"Good," he yells back, "I got the little bastards."

I quickly finish what I'm doing in the bathroom, take a quick look at my parents' electric toothbrush, wonder how it would feel "down there," then exit. The stench is too much.

Back when I lived with my mom and Nick on West Fourth Street, we always had rat problems. From day one. Our apartment was on the ground floor. By ground floor, I mean, well, basement. You actually had to walk downstairs from the street to enter our place. My mom and Nick had gotten the place back in the early 70s, and the rent stayed cheap there until some fucking rich yuppie guy purchased it and made the whole building into one townhouse. I hope he had rat problems too.

Anyway, from the first day I lived on West Fourth Street, I heard the rats. I'd hear them in the walls, making scratching sounds. I'd hear them underneath the bathtub, squealing and fighting with each other. I'd hear them talking to me in my sleep, telling me to kill couples in cars parked up in the Bronx. But I didn't listen to them. They were rats. Stealing ideas from dogs. What did they know?

They knew Nick hated them. A lot. Every week it would become a ritual with Nick. He'd go out and buy heavy duty rat poison, and then make me help him move the oven. Then, he'd put those little blue pellets in the holes the rats clawed open, and say, "Die, you little fucking shits." Then he'd make me help him move the oven back into place. Most of the time, though, I'd just stand there in my leather jacket with the US pins, and big ass sneakers cause I'm from New York, and watch him move it, saying, "a little more to the left, Nick, yeah, that's it." Nick would always look at me with sweat on his face and that look that said, "fuck you, George." Man, I love that guy.

The rats seemed to multiply exponentially as the years went by. The squealing got louder and louder, as did the holes behind the oven. First the holes were the size of pennies. Then dimes, then quarters. Finally they were like almost a half a foot tall. It was then that we knew that we were faced with more problems than loud noises and the smell of death.

One night, my girlfriend, Wendy, who was living with me and my parents in our tiny apartment at the time, went into the kitchen in the middle of the night to cook herself and me a frozen burrito. When she turned on the light, she claims she saw a rat the size of a small dog. A big small dog. She says she just stared at it, and it stared back at her. She claims they had a Mexican stand-off, and finally the rat won because she ran away, into the bathroom.

When she came back into my room to tell me this, I kind of half believed her. I told her that maybe she saw a mouse, that sometimes mice got into the house, but there was no way a rat had broken into the house. She told me it had a big long tail and red eyes. I hugged her, told her not to worry, that we'd take care of "that big ol' rat," and to go to sleep. On the mattress. On the floor. See, I only had a bed that could fit one person, so one of us had to sleep on the floor. And I let her sleep there. I'm that kinda guy.

"But the big rat will come in and bite me," she said, with a look of real panic in her eyes.

"It won't," I said, rubbing her shoulders, "I promise. Besides, it can't get in under my door, anyway."

I had seen mice in my room a few times, usually they had come in through the fireplace. But I couldn't imagine a rat. And I figured if she had seen a mouse, and it came in the room, it probably wouldn't bother her anyway. And I doubted it could hop up on the bed and get me. Which was the important thing.

Wendy and I told both Nick and my mom about the "rat" that had entered the house the following day. My mom looked terrified, and Nick looked, well, like he doubted the whole thing. I remember him whispering to me, "probably a mouse, huh?" I just nodded my head.

About a week or so went by, and Nick put some poison behind the oven and under the bathtub just to shut the rats up. And the women. At least one rat must have died, cause that smell hit my nose again and lasted for about four or five days.

One night, while Wendy was sleeping on the floor, I ventured into the kitchen to get something to eat. I think it was peas. Or grape-nuts. I can't remember which. It didn't matter, anyway, because once I turned on the light, I saw IT.

IT was standing there, in the middle of the kitchen, looking at me. Right in the eyes. And IT was huge. Fuck small dogs, this thing was like a Great Dane. Well, actually, a beagle. But the kitchen was so small, it looked like a Great Dane. And IT had a long ass tail. And Satan-red eyes. And IT just stared at me. And I just stared back at IT. With my pajamas with the paisleys on them. And my bare feet. And I knew that if IT wanted to, IT could lunge at my neck and kill me. So I just stared at IT.

And IT stared at me. This went on for what seemed like hours, but was probably only about a minute or so. Finally, I kinda just backed out slowly, hit the light off, ran into my room, and jumped over Wendy and on to my bed.

"Didja get something to eat?" asked Wendy, half asleep on the floor.

"Um, no, um, go back to sleep," I said to her.

She nodded her cute head, and closed her eyes. I hoped like hell the rat wouldn't decide to visit us that night.

The next day I told Nick about the Great Dane in the kitchen. He looked at me, and then asked me if I was seeing mice like Wendy. I told him there really was a huge rat, and it could have killed me. He made size jokes about penises, and I told him it wasn't funny. That this rat could kill us. My mom overheard the conversation and got all worried. Nick calmed her down and gave me a nasty look. He then went to the hardware store and got super-professional rat poison.

About a week later, I heard a screaming noise under the kitchen sink, and lots of things clanking around. When I opened the cabinet door, I saw a flash of the giant rat's teeth, and then it was gone. And all the cleaning fluids were knocked over, and the garbage had been gnawed upon. I told Nick, and we decided to put glue traps under there.

The next day, Nick and I hear loud noises under the sink, and figure we caught IT. We open the doors and find lots of rat hair on the glue trap. Lots. We figure we could peel it off, and sell it to Sy Sperling or something.

The next day Nick gets one of those heavy duty, super-duper rat traps. The kind that looks like a mouse trap, only twenty times the size. We figure it should break the fucker's neck, and then the house wouldn't be full of terrorized women anymore. But we both knew who was really terrified.

The next night we hear a loud snapping noise, followed by a squeal. We slam open the cabinet doors, and see the trap upside down, with no rat. But there is a bit of blood on the trap. It got away.

The next week passes as Nick sets poison on trays under the sink every night, and every morning, we open the doors to find the poison gone, as well as some of the garbage. This fucker could eat a lot of crap. Kinda like my bass player in Furious George, Evan.

One night, I venture into the kitchen to get some milk and grape-nuts. I wore my sneakers in case IT was there. And IT was when I turned on the light. Standing, unmoving, and with a big belly. I said, "Hello," and "Punk Rock" and "Have a nice evening." I then turned off the lights, and went to bed. Shaking.

The next day Nick and I came up with a plan. We even drew our plan on paper, and mapped the whole thing out. We figured the glue traps didn't work. We figured the super-size mouse traps didn't work, and we figured the poison didn't work. But what about all three, at once? That was our plan. But we'd have to lay it out so that there were no mistakes, and no escape. If we missed him this time, we knew IT would figure out it was a trap, and avoid it.

First we set up the super-size mouse trap. Next to that, the glue-trap. And next to that, the poison, served on a nice tray. We figured the rat would like start eating the poison, then kinda shift his body, get caught on the glue-trap, and than get his tail snapped and caught on the large mouse trap. So he'd be there, on all three traps, stuck. Not a half hour after we set up the traps we heard a loud squealing from under the sink, and lots of banging around. Nick and I look at each other, and smiled. Maybe we had caught the fucker. And caught it we had.

Its fucking snout was still in the pile of poison, its body and legs, glued to the giant glue-pad, and its tail, bleeding and under the metal frame of the giant mouse trap.

I looked at it and so did Nick. We must have just stared at it for like five minutes.

"George," said Nick, in a very somber voice, "that is one

huge fucking rat."

"I told you so," I said to him.

He just looked at me.

"So, um, what's next?" I said to him as the rat looked up from the tray of poison at both of us.

"I guess we just throw it in the garbage," said Nick, "If we can lift that heavy sucker."

I tell Nick that that is inhumane. That it will probably live for days and days, and starve to death, and that is cruel and unusual punishment.

He tells me, "Good, that'll show the fucker."

I explain to Nick that no matter what, that this is one of God's creatures, and we can not let it suffer like this. As I said that, IT started to squeal some more, like it understood what I was saying.

Nick finally agreed with me. Well, not really, but I think he went along with me to shut me up. He said we'd kill it.

"So, Nick, how do we do it?" I asked him.

"We could carve it up like a turkey," said Nick, as he opened the kitchen drawer full of knives.

I imagined all the blood and rat meat and told him that wasn't a good idea.

"We could shoot it," said Nick.

"We don't have a gun," I told him.

"Oh yeah," said Nick, "Damn."

Then Nick came up with an idea. He walked into my room, and came out with my old Louisville Slugger. My baseball bat.

"You want me to beat it to death?" I asked him, shocked.

"You got any better ideas, Mr. Wizard?" said Nick.

I didn't, so we agreed that I'd beat it to death.

We moved the rat out from under the sink with the bat, glue trap still attached to it's belly, and tail still in the giant mouse trap. As it lay on the kitchen floor, it looked up at me and showed me it's big long fangs. I raised the bat over my head and went to crush it's skull. But I couldn't. I couldn't make myself take one of God's creatures. Kill it. So I gave the bat to Nick.

"Slay it, killer," I said to Nick.

Nick held up the bat, but couldn't hit it either. Just then my mom walked into the kitchen, saw what was on the floor, screamed, and almost fainted. Nick went and sat her on their bed and calmed her down.

"It's, it's so big," she said. Nick nodded and told her that we'd get rid of it.

Nick and I returned to the kitchen, and looked at IT on the floor.

"George," he said, "let's just throw it away. It'll die on its own."

I thought about it again for a few moments, then told him that there was no way. That this thing had scared Wendy, my girlfriend. And deserved to die. I told him it scared me, and I was usually not a pussy. That the rat must pay for it's sins. I realized I no longer cared about "God's creature," but was hell bent on revenge, and that is what probably gave me the courage to bash it's brains in. That, and Slayer.

I went into my bedroom, leaving Nick with the bat in his hand, and the rat on the floor. I went to my closet and looked in. I felt like I was in a Rambo or Schwartzenegger movie. I reached for my old hockey shin-guards, and put them on. Strap by strap. I then tied a bandanna around my head, and then put on my hockey helmet. Then, I went to my record collection and found the meanest album I could find. A record that would make me want to kill. And kill. And kill again. Slayer's *Reign In Blood* was the album, and I knew it'd do the trick. Black Flag's *Damaged* almost could have done it, as could have *Today Your Love, Tommorow The World* by The Ramones, but, well, Slayer had Satan on their side. And I needed the Dark Prince. To Kill. I put on the song "Angel Of Death." I then put on my goalie gloves and walked into the kitchen, Slayer blaring behind me.

Nick looked at me, and then at the rat.

"Hey Rambo," he said.

"How ya doin'?" I said back, and then took the bat from his hands and raised it above my head.

"Seas of blood, bury life, smell your death as it burns, deep inside of you, abacinate, eyes that bleed, praying for the end of you" screamed Tom Ayara of Slayer behind me as I looked the rat in the eyes. It looked back at me.

And suddenly I felt something for this creature. This animal. This living being that God had created. It had just as much of a right to exist as I did. It ate, slept, had sex, and probably had a real life too. It probably had a family, friends, and may have even partied on the weekends. What gave me the right to kill a living creature? Surely it had a purpose on this Earth, and by me destroying it's life, I was robbing the world of something. Perhaps wonderful.

I put down the bat. I couldn't do it.

Suddenly the rat somehow managed to swing itself and the traps around, and tried to bite me in the leg. Fucker.

"Surgery, with no anesthesia, feel the knife pierce your intensely, inferior, no use to mankind, strapped down screaming out to die, Angel of Death!" screamed Slayer from behind me.

It was then I raised the bat, and bashed its brains in. Again and again. And again. It squealed and squealed, and I just kept yelling, "Fuck with me, huh? Try and bite me? I'm a guy who wears US pins on his leather jacket, and I got big sneakers and I'm from New York, fucker! Well fuck you. Fuck you! You stupid fucking rat. I'll punk rock your fucking head motherfucker. Stupid rat."

I think I screamed for like two minutes as I beat the rat to death. It wouldn't die so easily. It took a lot of hard knocks on its head until its skull would crack open.

Finally, with the rat dead on the floor, Nick opened the refrigerator door and got me a beer. And he got himself one too.

So we stood there, Nick and me, with blood all over our legs, rat brains all over the floor, having a beer. It was one of those special stepfather and son moments. It felt nice. But the moment was cut short.

Suddenly we heard a scratching sound coming from behind the oven, and then a loud squealing.

"Miller Time's over George," he said. Then we both got back to work.

Take My Life, Please.

Endnotes:

1. www.georgetabb.com
2. The Kick, Dean Dean & The Sex Machines, and the Dwarves rule!
3. I'm working on a book of my stories..and need *your* input. Please email me and tell me your favorite stories so I can include them in a book that will one day, I hope, be published! I'm at givemeabookdeal@georgetabb.com

OK, this month I'm going to talk a little more about CDs, and specifically CD packaging. First, understand I am a vinyl purist to the end. I have thousands of LPs and 7"s and maybe 50 CDs. I have thought, and continue to think, the CD is a totally bogus format. However, I have been forced to recognize that millions of people disagree with me. Despite the efforts of myself and many others to save the vinyl, there is a pretty big demand for punk on CD. This comes from younger kids and metal fans who have been successfully brainwashed by the industry, and from foreign countries where vinyl culture never really developed (especially SE Asia). I've been working one day a week at my local punk record store for 8 years now, plus doing distro at shows for much longer. I've used this space to talk about CD pricing before but I'd like to point out some things I've noticed about CD packaging.

First, people will pay whatever for CDs in plastic jewel cases. People think nothing of dropping $15 or more for a CD, provided it's in a plastic jewel case. Once you take away that plastic case and get "creative" with the packaging, things get dicey. When people package CDs in 7" or LP sleeves, plastic envelopes, and other strange packages, they automatically move out of the "convenience" and "consumer" column into the "curio" column. Let's remember this, CDs became popular because they are supposed to be convenient—they are small, light, easy to transport and ship, and a lot of people put CD players in their cars so they can listen to music at home or in the

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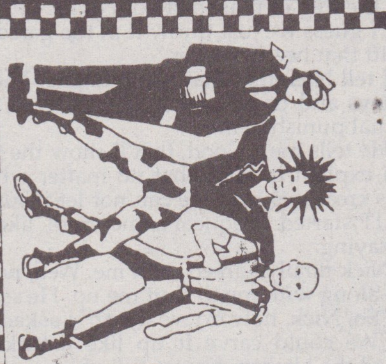

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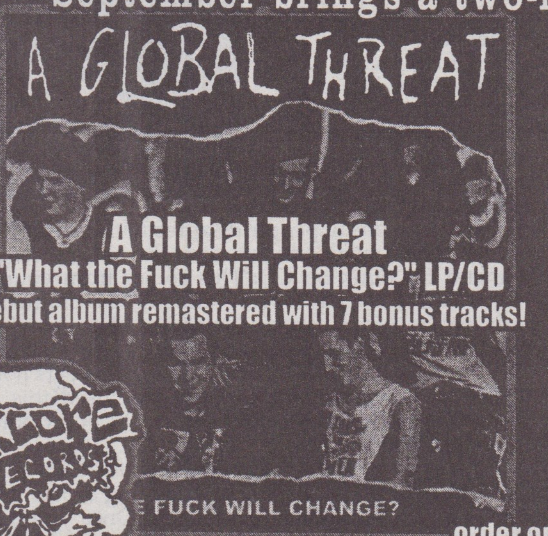

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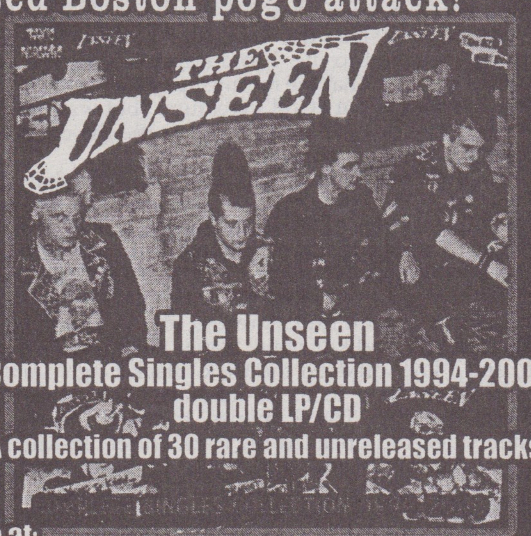

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car on the same format. One of the biggest criticisms of CDs when they took over was that there was no room for artwork. People continually try to challenge this trend by packaging CDs in "creative" ways to add more artwork and information. GIVE IT UP! People who buy CDs for the most part don't care about this sort of stuff. They want a uniform item in a plastic box. I know from working at the record store that most consumers turn up their nose at CDs packaging in little plastic sleeves (like mini 7"s), CD-Rs (which are supposedly super DIY) and especially CDs packaged as 7"s or LPs. I for one don't order funny packaged CDs anymore because they almost never sell.

If you are a store or distro and you get a box of CDs packaged as 7"s, what do you do with them? If you put them in stock with the 7"s you will be bombarded with questions like "why does this 7" cost so much?" and no matter how big you write on it "THIS IS A CD" people will try to buy it and then want to give it back when they find out it's not a 7". The same is true of CDs packaged as LPs. The people who are looking for CDs will mostly never see it because they are over the CD section clicking through row after row of comfortingly uniform plastic jewel cases. These are hard to display at shows and in stores, and usually wind up in some sort of "special section" that never gets looked at. At Extreme Noise we've tried every conceivable scheme to display and sell unusually packaged CDs and none of them work satisfactorily. Most of the funny packaged CDS just sit unsold year after year. Not only does this not get bands' music heard, it also hurts the stores and distros who get stuck with this stuff. Also, I think this stuff gets listened to less at home. People have to stick it in some special spot in their collection, and that probably means it doesn't get pulled out and played very often.

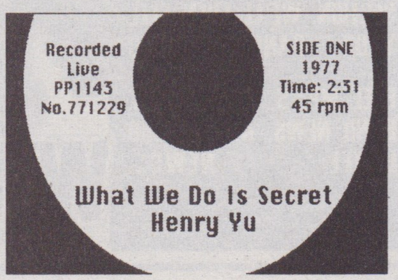
Case study #1: Aus Rotten. I love Aus Rotten. From the first time I saw this band back in '93, I was hooked. I thought, here was the Conflict of the 90s. This band had the chops and the message. I thought if ever there was a chance for a political punk band to get really big and make a difference in our time, this was the band. I put out a 7" for them and then they moved on to Tribal War Records. All their records sold well, but they insisted on packaging their CDs in LP sleeves. This was done to get more political information, artwork, and a poster to the kids that came with the LP. However, I know for a fact that sales of this format were very weak: distros and retailers have a tough time with CDs in LP sleeves and the only way to really get rid of these is by mail order. At the same time, punk bands with much less of a message, such as the Casualties and Blanks, were making great inroads into the "mall punk" scene. These young kids had probably never even seen a record player. I feel like an opportunity was missed to bring music and anti-authoritarian politics to a lot of kids who opted for a less challenging fashion punk statement instead. In my opinion, Aus Rotten suffered from a catch-22 here. In an attempt to make their message more up front and accessible by putting tons of info in their CD packaging, they then made it inaccessible to the people they were probably trying to reach.

Case study #2: Iron Sausage. Iron Sausage are a great grindcore band from Australia. They put out a CD on Chaotic Thoughts records that came in a screen printed canvas sack with a booklet. I'm sure the band thought they were being super-creative and giving the kids a real good package for their money. Instead they created a monster that is impossible to sell and display in any store or distro. I did a few big trades with Chaotic Thoughts about four years ago. I got five or ten copies of each of the label's releases. All the vinyl has been sold out for years, but I still have four copies of the Iron Sausage sitting unsold at the record store. Iron Sausage also got caught in the same catch-22 as Aus Rotten—they tried to do something cool, but it backfired. Also, probably most stores and distros won't order their stuff in the future because they just remember Iron Sausage as a band that "didn't sell."

Case study #3: the exceptions The only exceptions I can think of are really nice CD box sets. "Clash on Broadway" for instance, will probably always sell. People seem to think that a box set is some sort of acceptable exception to their prejudice against funny packaged CDs. More DIY examples would be the Sin Dios CD/books, and the Shellac CD box. These have sold pretty well. Part of the reason I think is that you can set a box on the counter or in a glass cabinet and it will catch the customer's eye.

OK, every time I open a box of records or CDs I've traded and see some CDs packaged in 7" sleeves my heart sinks. I know no matter how good the music is, I'll never get rid of these things. The only effective way to distro funny packaged CDs is through mail order, where the customer bases their selection objectively based on a written review. While this is "pure" music consumerism untainted by packaging or artwork, it's only a small percentage of the market. I think as popular as mail order is in the punk scene, it's still less than 20% of the records that are distributed. Most sell at stores and distros hand to hand. If you are a band or label, please take my advice: if you want to do cool packaging, put it out on vinyl. If you want to do CDs, stick with the plastic jewel case. It's not just your own sales (I'm thinking some bands don't care about sales, they just want to put it out) but it hurts the rest of the DIY movement. If you feel you have to put out something packaged funny like this, make sure you specify in your catalogs and trade lists "this CD is packaged like a 7" so people like me can be sure not to order it.

OK, before you write an angry letter attacking me, think a little about what you are defending. CDs are bogus to begin with. Some of us have come to accept them just like we have come to accept paying sales tax, stopping at red lights, and wearing condoms—it's not what you want to do, but everyone else is doing it so you better go along. Before you jump to the defense of your silly packaged CDs, ask yourself this, "why not put it out on vinyl?"



2003 Profusion

Thus begins my fourth calendar year of writing these oft-unread and much mismaligned unimaginations, spiraling from between my fingertips to your eyes only to be stopped dead in their tracks by the vigilant brains you have strapped on. Nevertheless, trudge on I do, as light entertainment. No political bones in me, no caring, no movement, no breathing…fueled only by a fuck youse attitude. Some of you lilywhites out there don't quite understand me (o woe is me), being the lit heathens you are, but read and laugh 'cos that's what it's all about. Try not to choke on your food food tho. Leave the sacred cattle at home.

Code Blue

Got wind of this one via the east coasters. Paul Decolator died Thursday Nov 14, 2002. Paul was an integral part of New Jersey's scene. As a member of Pleased Youth, Loose, and as a guitarist for the legendary GG Allin, he helped define NJ hardcore. My comedy writer couldn't figure out why GG never rechristened Paul as Paul Defecator, given the GG stage show, but let's pay our respects, shall we? A show at the Court Tavern featured bands that had a direct relationship with Paul: True Love, Anderson Council, and Parallax. Services were held on November 16. Donations in the memory of Paul are welcome to WFMU, PO Box 2011, Jersey City, NJ 07303-2011. A longer obit can be found at Jim Testa's www.Jerseybeat.com.

Dancing With Myself

Somewhere along the way, the self-conscious awkwardness combined with toe-opening-curtains type obsessiveness subsided and I found myself willing and able to dance in the privacy of hordes. After some near brushes (not the kind you think) in my mid-30s at the gay/straight disco palace **Panorama** in Portland, I found San Francisco to be far friendlier place for happy feet. There, reuniting with friends and fellow *MRR* compatriots, we managed to not let our (what little we had left) youth go to waste, and do a little dance, make a little love, get down…nevermind.

Sixteen rooled the town for awhile. Even Jeff Bale would make an occasional appearance. Held at the Cat Club over on Folsom and sometimes 333 Ritch, Glam and Punk were the order. You'd get Ziggy-era Bowie, T. Rex, Sweet, Eno on the glitter side, then get tuff with the Misfits (usually "Where Eagles Dare"), Gun Club, Clash, and then hard rawk like the Runaways

and the Crue and mebbe even early Halen.

The Cat Club's cool. Two dance floors, decent sound system, not great. The back room always attracts the edgier crowd—after all, it's got Le Cage Awful, where many a deux preen or make out in luxurious slo-mo.. Front room's got the bigger bar, better lighting, and gets the beautiful people on the make, which counts us pock-marked low-riding huskies out.

1984 is on Thursday nights and savvy try to get there shortly before ten, when the entry is still free, tho past is still a mere $5. Inside, things are still just warming up at that time, as Hall and Oates or Michael Jackson might be played to everyone's horror in the front room. Tiff and Deb traipse the full run of the dance floor (sometimes careening into the bar area), combining the moves of Tony Basil and George Jefferson's jive-head-bobbing to arrive at what is uniquely their own riveting synchronized-yet-not de stijl. With perpetually matching outfits, often derivations of Olivia Newton John's "Let Get Physical" video, the girls are often mistaken for twins or shameless co-peddlers of eye shadow (Mary Kay on a binge), but are actually friends who look remarkably alike. When things finally get hopping, the back room lies host to the better dancing, as Synth Pop a la the Flock and OMD and Depeche and Sisters lead the hipsters toward minimal gyrations. The front room has the frats and the debs trading stares up and down their young bods, with the occasional fortysomething Ball boy flitting thru to dance with all the ladies to the likes of Go-Go's, Clash, Prince. Back in the back, the occasional wayward debs will wander in and shake their tube tops on the podium, where we are all too cool to look, but steal glances heavily. Friday nights, also at the Cat, are home to **Fake**, the bastard spawn of **Sixxteen**. A lot more black clothes and Costco-bought mascara.

Once a month, **New Wave City** roams the city and ends up at one of a half dozen clubs that play host to it. With at least two, but sometimes three dance floors, it attracts the bridge and tunnelers, but we let them feel each other up in the smoking section. The regulars are there, the bad-dancing asian girl whose perpetual stage presence should be revoked, the trenchcoated fop, the stilettoed dominatrix with the chopsticks in her hair, the girl-shaped-like-a-man who wears a massive neck brace and somehow is able to dance-and-drink-from-a-straw while in traction. **New Wave City** always features an artist for the evening, and spins a heavy dose of them between the usual suspects. Sisters of Mercy, the Cure, Joy Division are examples of featured artists. The downside of this zoo is the $10 cover with no ins and outs. So make sure you smuggle in your ham sandwiches like a tail between your legs.

The ominously named Stud bar is home to the first and third Sunday-ed **Death Rock Booty Call**. Sunday night brings out the dead, and the occasional diet coke swillin' lug. Tiff and Deb might be seen shamelessly promoting their leg-warmed duality by handing out autographed stickers of themselves or doing synchronized yoga moves while Naked Raygun or Black Flag is being blared. At its peak, everyone is frugging to The Fall or Gang of Four on a dance floor barely large enough to play Twister. Lots of gay/straight interaction, but usually via leather and beads of sweat or gobs of saliva.

Other dance nights worthy of mention include **Pop Scene**, **Death Guild**, **She Said** (a raunchabilly night named after the Hasil Adkins song, you boneheads).

As our beloved Joy Div sang, "Oh Where Does It End...."

Drinking Is Great

The bars in Williamsburg, Brooklyn are plentiful and stocked with cool fish who drink like they are. The Red and the Black (a Blue Oyster Cult reference?) has a rock and roll night on Friday nights, tho midweek we could still hear Mission of Burma by the cozy fireplace. Sweetwaters smells antiseptic till the smoke wafts in and the beer gets spilled and the television spins B-movies. Galapagos is where the big apples are led to water, Pete's Candy Store reeks of trendiness and indie bands. The punks light up to the Misfits and Black Flag at Union Pool. Boddington flows by the Trip at the Ale House on Driggs and the President of the Half Asian Ursine Snuggle Society holds court. The 4:30am east coast close works with my west coast biorhythms. One late night in October, while drinking with my elle, we heard the doom groove of the Wipers, not just one beloved track mind you, but the jukebox stuck on'em. One after another. Eventually the barkeep points me to the culprit. One John Lyons hanging out by the pool table. He, ex-of the mighty Portland band E-13 who shared light with the likes of Poison Idea on the fyrce Drinking is Great 7" comp. We bonded, as most who close the bar in the wee hours do, but also being fellow ex-Oregonians'n all. We made a quick late night phone call to one Malcolm Conover ex-Fatal Erection honcho to positively confirm both our pedigrees. As we parted, John left a bright shiny object appears in my hand. It plays E-13. A whole burned disc of 'em. Scorching hardcore par excellence, whoa, everything they've ever recorded...I staggered home, luckily one block, and happy.

Shite Tacky Mush Rooms

No drivel in the mailbox this month. Where the f are youse out there? Even nicely written solicitations to Brian at Grand Theft Auto, plus the guys who put out the *Life Is...* comp reissues have turned up zilch. You guys will never get lip from these pages, dudes, too bad 'cos I really wanted to review the Saucers retrospective on GTA. Like always, Henry 4309 23rd St, San Francisco, CA, 94114, and new email: specialcharge @yahoo.com. Every submission gets mentioned, bar any unwashed lacy items. Ta Ta!

"Let's not talk about bombs
The night before the world ends
We can draw the line some other time."
—X

So I'm on my way to Portland. I got laid off from my gardening job a few months ago. After that, I was working my usual gig as a print trafficker at a film festival. This one was a new festival for me, smaller and spread all over the Bay, from Santa Rosa and Napa in the north, all the way down to San Jose in the south. The job involves different things depending on which festival I'm working, but it always involves shipping and receiving the films, primarily 35mm prints. Some more commercial festivals get prints delivered in film cans with handles that balance out the weight of the prints. I think we only had one that was delivered like that for this festival. The rest were delivered in tired, weathered cardboard boxes that'd been reused by festival after festival, eventually sent on to me. Most films that are not Amerikan, Italian, German, or French are not given the luxury of cans, with some exceptions. It is impossible to lift those boxes correctly, and though I occasionally attempted to bend my knees to avoid injury, it was a surface, and pathetic, effort.

The majority of the job involves driving my trusty black pickup truck hundreds of miles over a two or three week period. Lots of coffee, lots of help from my friends. "C'mon, man, you know you wanna spend your Saturday night helping me load fifty pound films in and out of my truck—I mean, what's the last time you saw the dying vineyards at night? Fuck that show."

Somehow it worked, not cuz anyone is really a sucker, but because my underemployed friends sometimes romanticize riding around in the darkness of the highway at 11 pm.

So that festival is over now, I managed to apply for unemployment, and I bought a really fucking cheap Amtrak ticket. If you can get access to a computer, check out the "rail deals" section of the Amtrak web page. My return ticket, Seattle to Los Angeles (cities that I'm not coming from or going to, but it'll work out) was $17.80. I'm drinking addict amounts of coffee again after a dedicated but sporadic abstinence, and I have some cash from the festival. And I'm ready to get away from this town, where it seems like everyone I know is on the brink, or should be, and I am fresh outta ideas on how to help them or myself. I just keep talking about heartbreak and sex as if I really give a shit, in order to keep my pea brain clear of real concerns, to pace myself against desperation. Cuz there's plenty of it to succumb to.

But then I got on the train, and now I'm alone, with no one I know around. I have a coke bottle full of vodka. There's some punk boy with tattoos that I see on my way to the toilet; I think about asking if he wants to drink vodka in the observatory car

with me. I decide against it, cuz I don't want him to think I wanna make out with him—I just thought it might be fun to drink with some weird punk kid I don't know who doubtless knows half of my friends throughout the country, cuz this world is so small. Whatever, the point is to get some space. I get back to my seat and there is a man snoring in stereo in the seat in front of me, the noise is literally shooting out both sides of his body and reverberating throughout the car. The guy behind me is watching a portable TV or something and I grab my book and make my way to the observatory car, which is all windows, with skylights on the ceiling and everything, but it's about eleven and there's nothing to observe, just pitch black surrounding me like I could be anywhere.

I'm used to taking the I-5, pushing myself to drive without stopping except for gas, trying to only pee and get coffee at the gas station. Sometimes I do it alone, but usually I'm with one other highly caffeinated friend, and we listen to weird radio as the towns pass by in the night, unidentified, a perfect complement to the anonymity we are able to hold on to, protected in the controlled environment of my truck. It is a 12-hour drive, sometimes less; I think last time Sarah and I made it in a little over 10 hours.

This is so different; I am literally ingesting other people's breath, germs, and entertainment. I mean, it's not the bus, there are places to go to other than my seat, but their distance is an illusion. The snack car is under the observatory car, and although the color scheme is different, every car recycles the same air and the same passengers, caught in the same conversations. We are all stuck on here for different reasons, and we all paid different amounts; this results in an odd grouping of people. It is nothing like an airplane, it is more akin to public transportation, but twenty hours of luxurious public transportation? I'm not sure how to characterize it.

After reading a hundred pages of *We Got The Neutron Bomb* and drinking fuck knows how much vodka cut with flat tonic water, I abandon the brightly lit observatory car to try to crash. My seat has the same noisy scene, that guy snoring and the other guy, the one directly behind me, is now blasting music as he lays cuddled up in his seat with blankets. I manage to find a seat in another car, where there's only one person making noise and he's coughing instead of snoring. I curl up and fade into the darkness, stomaching deep breaths of his sickness. The woman in the seat next to me helps me with my foot rests and I want to hug her; small acts of kindness kill me. The pain I thought was just vodka gnawing at my weak stomach was cramps. It is a burden and a relief; I know that I'll be a little less raw emotionally once I get to Portland; the overwhelmed desperation I've been sinking in and out of this past week must have something to do with hormones.

I go in and out of sleep full of dreams I don't remember. It is 10:30 in the morning when we arrive in Klamath Falls, Oregon, and I pull myself into consciousness and push my hair outta my eyes cuz it's time for morning. These are the times when I wonder how I lived without coffee. I grab my purse and go towards the cafe car. My bra is twisted, my belt buckle is loose, my fly is down, my long black hair is teased and knotted like I spent all night getting rugburn. I manage to take care of my pants pretty early on in the five car trek into the bathroom of the cafe car. Regardless, when I stumble down the stairs there's some hesher dude hanging out with the guy who coughed all night who says "Girl, you look wild." I push past and go into the bathroom to blow my nose, put on some eyeliner. Of course I don't have stuff to wash my face or brush my teeth with, but I always have liquid eyeliner. He's right, of course—I look like I spent the night drinking vodka and then crashing on a chair, but I know that's not what he means. He means I have tight pants and tattoos and I look like maybe I'm dumb enough to talk to him and get wound up in his weird story. I rip the crud out of my eyes and bust outta the john. He yells something at me as I leave, I ignore him, and the small cup of weak coffee is a buck fifty.

During the day taking the train is a luxury beyond words. The tracks don't run along highways, so you see parts of the country you'd never see otherwise; sometimes there are huge anonymous bodies of water, or valleys, or just more trees than I thought were left in Amerika. I see an abandoned car that has "asshole" and "bitch" spraypainted on the sides; some guy in an old white Chevy pickup is next to it, doing I dunno what. I manage to write my old friend in New Orleans a long letter, one I hope to actually send. I am stubborn and use both sides of the transparent notebook paper that makes up my journal. The sharpie pen in my purse has a note on the side of it that specifically forbids using it for letter-writing; I do anyway, and the end result in an ink-soaked mess.

The guy from outside the bathroom comes up and sits next to me, really one seat over, with his son. The boy is small and blond and I don't really look at him. Another man, drinking a can of Budweiser, joins them. The boy pushes his small forehead against the window, like the walls of the car are nowhere near him, like he can get out.

The men begin talking, and because I am writing a letter and not reading my book, I'm unable to tune them out. The man with the kid starts talking endlessly about how women are bitches and a boy needs to be raised with his father. Somewhere in middle of recounting all of his failed relationships with conniving women, including the boy's mother, he mentions that his dad left him and he'll never speak to him again. That little shred of vulnerability pollutes his bitterness with humanity. The other man explains that he has a kid too, a son, that he is letting his ex-wife raise. He kicked dope two weeks ago and he's trying to get his shit together but he doesn't know how to raise a kid. The other man goes back to his tangent about evil women who don't know anything about raising kids. The guy with the Budweiser starts going off about the government, says he's Native Amerikan and everything was stolen from him, he's addicted to drugs and education lies to his kid and he doesn't give a fuck about this country. Begins to break it down, and the dude takes his son and bails; he just wanted to bitch about stupid chicks, not go to the depth of what is really wrong with the world. I find myself judging him, worrying about the sling on his kid's arm, worrying in general. Then I notice that they are participating in an outward manifestation of the inward struggle I've been having for days. The world is full of shit, it is about to explode into a million pieces or succumb to disease, our lives are only gonna get more commercial, were are being constantly and consistently observed, and all anyone really is able to do is talk about how love bites. I am constantly rerouting my brain whenever I start to think too much. I'm just like this guy, taking the kid and splitting when shit gets too heavy.

RALL DEAL

It's hard to believe now, but the Leader had been something of a national laughing-stock. The kind of politician who attracted attention with speeches ridiculed for their extremism, hokey sentimentality, and tortured syntax, he was ridiculed by the press and the intelligentsia as an idiot and a buffoon. They underestimated him.

The candidate was lucky when he presented himself for consideration. He faced a divided, disorganized opposition. Still, the apathy and confusion of the time wasn't quite severe enough to allow a small-time fellow like him to seize power. Converting his personality flaws into tactical advantages, however, he applied a sort of animal cunning to get what he craved.

Behind the scenes he promised future favors to rich businessmen in exchange for their support. Using the money he collected from these wealthy men, he went to a small cabal of shadowy power-brokers who controlled the political system and bullied them into giving him what the democratic process had denied him. "I'm going to win one way or the other," he growled. "Are you with me or against me?"

And so, despite carrying a plurality of the vote, he became the Leader.

Ruling his country wasn't enough for the Leader, though—not by a long shot. He and his close friends, the ones who had stuck by him even when everyone had made fun of him, had radical plans. They wanted to transform their country into a mighty empire the likes of which the world had never seen

before.

The nation's previous governments had gone into debt building up an immense, technologically sophisticated military, but those weapons had ostensibly been built to keep the peace. Now the Leader and his advisers schemed to use those defensive weapons, and to build new offensive ones, to force other nations to fear them. They plotted to exploit other countries for their natural resources and to press their peoples into slavery. They would invade and occupy the richest countries; other states, fearful of the same fate, would sign away their wealth and their workers through favorable trade agreements.

Although the Leader's country had a history of militarism, his people had always insisted on some pretext before they marched off to war. They considered themselves gentle and peaceful, but they were no cowards—they would defend themselves ferociously whenever they were attacked.

One day a great fire broke out in the country's largest city. One of the nation's most impressive buildings—an important symbol—burned to the ground. Many innocent people died.

Assuming a grave tone and mournful expression as the fires still raged, the Leader addressed his people: terrorists from overseas, he said, had attacked the country. "If anyone should think that through terrorism it can bend us, then he forgets our character," he told them. "He who raises himself against this life of the nation will meet our resolution." He asked the people for their help. These were especially difficult times, he said. Wouldn't they grant him special rights, extra powers, to ensure that he could defend the nation from future threats?

Everyone was frightened. More than anything else, they wanted to make sure that nothing as bad as that terrible fire ever happened to them again. The Leader, people said, had grown into his job. His words flowed smoothly and confidently through his lips. Even the journalists who used to insult him were impressed with his newfound self-assuredness. They called on the people to give the Leader the support that he requested. And they did.

The Leader moved swiftly to crush his potential opponents. Foreigners, men with beards and swarthy skin, were rounded up and sent to detention camps, never to be seen again. Those who worshipped religions incompatible with total devotion to the Leader were singled out for discrimination. Opposition politicians disappeared from public life. People who expressed dismay or who questioned the Leader's wisdom lost their jobs, friends, and social standing. Going against the Leader, after all, meant opposing the man who was defending the nation against those who sought to destroy it. By definition, anyone who tried to stop the leader was unpatriotic, perhaps even in league with the terrorists.

The Leader centralized the federal bureaucracy in a way that concentrated power in his hands and those of his inner circle. He used the might of the state to spy on citizens, so that nobody could ever be certain that what they said was private. Soon no one dared say anything that could be interpreted as insulting the Leader or his policies.

To be sure, some journalists, being inquisitive by nature, tried to investigate the Leader and the effects of his policies. But their editors needed access to the Leader and his officials in order to collect the news, so they only published articles favorable to the Leader. The people, whose only knowledge of current events came from their newspapers, increasingly supported the Leader. And the parliament, which the framers of the old constitution had created as a check against executive power, was pressured by the voters to go along with everything that the Leader wanted. Soon even the leaders of the opposition party were pledging their unconditional loyalty to the Leader. The parliament still convened, but they had become a rubber-stamp body.

The Leader had successfully consolidated his power in a short time, but the economy he had inherited from his democratically elected predecessor kept getting worse. As the fright of the fire began to fade from memory, workers began to grumble that they couldn't find good jobs. The Leader had to act quickly to prevent his popularity from slipping, so he launched his first war.

One morning the world awoke to news that the Leader's massive armies were laying waste to the ill-equipped militia of a small country in a remote region of the continent. Neighboring nations had long considered the backwards, culturally medieval victim of the Leader's war to be something of a nuisance. Thus they were inclined to believe the Leader when he blamed their government for the terrorist fire. And while some of the rulers of other countries privately doubted that vengeance was the real reason for the war—everybody knew that the little nation being pulverized by bombs was on an important trade route—they chose not to speak up. The Leader's country was far too rich and powerful to fight and, in any case, they wouldn't mind if the war brought order to that savage and lawless land.

A few months later, the Leader announced the success of his blitzkrieg to his jubilant people. The attack against them had been avenged, he said. Although their worst enemies had escaped—only for now, he said—the world had been put on notice. No one would ever dare insult, much less murder, the Leader's people again.

For a few months the Leader reveled in the glory of his victory. People felt that the Leader was not only protecting them, but making them feel strong again. But one day his chief military adviser came to him with a warning. "People are beginning to forget about your victory," he said. "They're worried about their bellies. Their sons are stuck in the occupation force, fighting the remnants of the militia. They're afraid that another attack is coming. Why not start an even bigger war to distract them from these concerns?"

Rather than merely invade another country, however, the Leader hit upon a new strategy. He demanded that the world allow him to invade yet another nation, even though that land had caused no offense to its neighbors for many years. "I am a man of peace, but these evil ones are planning to kill my people," he roared. "I will invade them and stop them and I will consider anyone who doesn't agree to be our enemy." He ordered his armies to mass at the borders of his intended prize.

The world's rulers, terrified of the Leader's hubris and demonstrated willingness to throw his nation's armies into war, gathered to decide what to do. Everyone agreed that what the Leader intended to do was reckless, immoral and unjustified, but nobody wanted to stand alone and thus risk becoming his next target. Besides, they told themselves, he only wants one more country. It's worth voting for one small war now to prevent the whole world from being consumed by war, they agreed.

And so, after much discussion and debate, the world's rulers voted to appease the Leader.

NEW BOOK: Here's the book George W. Bush doesn't want you to read! *Gas War: The Truth Behind the American Occupation Of Afghanistan* should be out by the time you read this. It's my comprehensive, painstakingly researched look at the real reason Bush ordered the invasion of Afghanistan: to run a gas pipeline from the world's biggest oil reserves (in Kazakhstan) to the sea for transportation by tankers. *Gas War* relies on mainstream sources to piece together the biggest scandal of the century so far—how the world's richest nation bombed its poorest for the sake of corporate gain. *Gas War* is available through my website www.RALL.com or Amazon but not through bookstores because none of my regular publishers dared touch this controversial topic. It's $10.95, 136 pages, and includes maps, charts and some of my cartoons. If you have friends who still defend Bush, this will give you the ammunition to take them on.

Television Commercials

Enrique Iglesias talks in voiceover about how when he is on stage he feels love for a special someone. He gazes into the audience, looking from girl to girl to girl until his eyes finally lock upon a man. Enrique stares intensely, and appears to reach out to the man. Everything on the man's face indicates extreme discomfort with the erotic implications of Enrique's gaze. Enrique draws closer and his eyes seem glazed with desire. Suddenly,

Enrique grabs a bag of Doritos from the uncomfortable looking man. Enrique eats the Doritos lustily.

Geoffrey the Toys-R-Us giraffe tells a little girl about all of the latest Barbie dolls and accessories. The little girl appears disgusted as she suspiciously eyes the kindly giraffe. She retorts accusingly, "You know an awful lot about Barbie for a boy!" The embarrassed giraffe can only feebly reply; " Uh, and I—I'm comfortable with that."

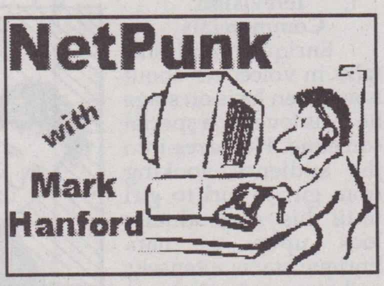
A man with a microphone wanders the streets interviewing various people about how they use Sharpie markers. The interviewer sees a workman who is leaning over in a way that reveals the elastic band of his underwear. We are able to see that the name "Bob" has been written in marker on the elastic band. The interviewer approaches and asks; "So how do you use your Sharpies, Bob?" The workman replies that his name is Dave. The realization hits the interviewer that Dave is wearing another man's underwear. The interviewer looks back and forth from Dave to the underwear with an increasingly perplexed and repulsed expression. The interviewer then turns a knowing glance backs towards the viewer, to imply that we share his revulsion.

In an advertisement for a film entitled *The Hot Chick,* a pretty young woman magically transforms into an ugly man. The ugly man telephones a handsome young man who appears to be at a ski lodge, and cries into the phone, "I should have made love to you while I had the chance." The young man is shocked into a nearly catatonic state. As he slumps into a chair, a friend nearby asks, "Who was that?" The handsome young man replies in horror, "I think it was my old camp counselor."

In an advertisement for the Adam Sandler movie entitled *Anger Management,* Adam Sandler and Jack Nicholson are in bed together. Sandler is uncomfortably bundled up to his chin in the bed sheets, while Nicholson removes his shorts and proclaims, "I like to sleep in the raw." The scene abruptly cuts to Nicholson throwing something at Sandler which shatters against a nearby kitchen wall as Nicholson screams. Nicholson then calmly asks Sandler, "Now do you know why I did that?" Sandler replies, "Because I wouldn't spoon with you last night?"

Here are five examples of the kind of offensive, institutionalized homophobia that is constantly on your TV. All of these television commercials have something in common. They rely on the notion that the mere existence of gay men in the world is preposterous and laughable. That's why in each example, implied homosexuality is the only punch-line of the joke. I would imagine that many of you now reading this, both gay and straight, have seen one or more of these commercials. These are not the only ones that I have seen. There are many more like them on our television screens. Perhaps you didn't even notice that blatant homophobia was being used to sell the product. If you didn't, then I'd just like to say that I for one do not think that the mere possibility that someone might be gay is particularly humorous. Imagine how you would like it if you were gay, to have someone point at you in a room full of people shouting, *"I think you're gay!"*... and then have that entire room erupt in hysterical laughter. That is the exact equivalent of the idea behind the so-called "humor" of these commercials. The only proper response to it is, "fuck you!"

I'm not without a sense of humor, but the simple fact that I happen to exist is *not* some big joke!



Everyone loves to rant...well, at least most punk rockers. And, for better or worse, the net has given those who like to rant a forum to spout their views endlessly on countless websites and web logs on thousands of servers around the world. Some of it is funny, some very personal, and some entertaining. Sometimes you wonder whether they realize that people actually are reading what they are posting. Anyway, this month I thought I'd turn you onto a few sites that mostly consist of various people ranting about various things.

We'll start off, appropriately, with *Rant-O-Rama* (http://www.rant-o-rama.com/). You'll find both real and not-so-real stories and rants here, as well as letters to the editor, a guestbook, and a handful of other stuff. Plenty to read though, which is what makes a rant site worthwhile anyway.

Rantcore is about as punk as it gets. The guy who rants on this site says what he means, even when what he means has very little significance to the world as a whole. Some funny stuff here, like his comparison of record labels, and the section where he gets into it with a person who emailed him. Take a look at http://www.rantcore.com/ .

Off Camera says that their purpose is to "remind people of the rest of the world and to get them to look at life differently," and it does a pretty good job of it. It is basically one guy's personal zine, with occasional guest columns. The stuff you'll find here is less random rants and more well thought-out pieces about feelings and life in general. This is a worthwhile use of your time—http://www.offcamera.org/ .

Sweet Tea Zine is another punk rock per-zine. Lots of rants here, including such diverse topics as dogs, drugs, metalheads, boredom, and everything in between. It doesn't appear that they update it that often, but there is already a lot of stuff available for your reading pleasure. *Sweet Tea* is at http://www.sweet-teazine.com/ .

I stumbled across *The Home Despot* by accident, and boy am I glad I did. There are some hilarious rants on here. The author takes on *Punk Planet,* liberal arts, health food, groupies, and more. And all of it is done with pretty savage (and occasionally juvenile) wit. There's also a section of weird classifieds culled from Craigslist, a pranks section, and more. You'll find *The Home Despot* at http://www.harmful.org/homedespot/ .

This is not all of the punk rock rant sites on the net by any stretch of the imagination, but these should keep you busy for at least the next few days. I'm going to move on to less rant-related material now, but you'll probably still find some interesting opinions.

James Squeaky, the guy who once did *Mister Ridiculous* zine, has a new mag called *Sincere Brutality.* I picked up a copy of the first issue, and it is pretty good. His website is worthwhile as well, as he posts a ton of record reviews, as well as show reviews, mp3s, and other stuff and junk. Take a look at http://www.sincerebrutality.com/

For those of you who remember back when punk rock and skateboarding when hand-in-hand, you should head on over to skaterock.com. It's all about skateboarding music. You'll find articles about bands like the Briefs, McRad, Duane Peters, The Descendents and more. Yep, it is definitely old school around there - http://www.skaterock.com/

If you haven't seen it yet, *Get Your War On* is a fantastic online graphic novel (comic strip) dealing with the bullshit that this country is perpetrating in the name of "Enduring Freedom." Started soon after the New York terrorist attacks, *Get Your War On* takes a critical view of current events. Plus, any royalties the author makes goes to a team that helps diffuse landmines. Visit *Get Your War On* at http://www.mnftiu.cc/mnftiu.cc/war.html.

Nothing Nice to Say is another online comic strip, but isn't as political as *Get Your War On.* Still, funny stuff here, running from geek to punk. He manages about a dozen strips a month, and has been doing these for about a year, so there are plenty of strips to read. *Nothing Nice to Say* is at http://www.nothing-nice.com/ .

Movie Punks is another strip that comes out three times a week. It mostly deals with current movies with sarcastic (punk?) wit. It is hit and miss, but usually the strip at least gets a smile out of me. Take a look for yourself at http://www.moviepunks.com/ .

If you've got a decent computer and a good connection, then you have to check out *The Emo Video Game* at http://www.emogame.com/ . The cast of characters include some of your favorite emo "stars." The net needs more silly stuff like this.

Finally, at http://www.sykospark.net/ you'll find an Insta Punk kit that is sure to piss some of you off. There is also the Insta Goth, Insta Emo, and Insta Raver kit. Really, everybody is a target.

OK, so that about does it for this month. My piece of net news is that I posted a classified to Craigslist saying that I was

looking for a band, and I may have actually found one! If it works out, I'll have the web address for you next month. Until then, you can email me your good finds at netpunk@diehip-piedie.com and you can visit all of my past, present, and future columns online in the netpunk section of http:://www.diehip-piedie.com/ . Until next month... see ya.

"THE SEEKER"

Hey punk! We got an excellent new split punk-rock EP from the Netherlands! The record is the first release of a new Dutch label called PogoPunx. This release showcases two current young bands from the Netherlands, BEANS and BBK.

BEANS starts off the first side with "pull through," sung in English. Check out these lyrics: "If I drink this bottle of whiskey/ I'll be far from here/ And if I take this care and drive it far/ I'll be far from fuckin' everywhere/ I lied I hated despised and I stole/ I fell down to blame others/ As I cheated my soul/ And all the dreams of a perfect life/ Were shattered and broken/ As I woke up in hell/ There must be something we can do/ I wanna know right now/ There must be something we can do/ And I know/ We're gonna pull through/ Any way the wind will blow/ We're gonna pull through/ And it only goes to show/ We're gonna pull through/ Gotta find myself some shelter/ Get myself on track again/ I wanna know what is right/ I got just one life/ But it feels like beating Spiderman/ I'm tired I'm down I'm trying to get up/ I've gotta face the facts/ But I think I'm cracking up/ Waiting for some better days/ When hopelessness is all I got." Having a good sing-a-long, street punk feel to it like early SWINGIN' UTTERS or DROPKICK MURPHYS. "Blackmind" is next with a good solid DUCKY BOYS momentum permeating the song. The BEANS finish up their side of this EP with "Hey Kid." This is melodic street rock with plenty-o-balls!

Flip the EP over and you get BBK and these guys come out thrashing! BBK leaps right into "Lost Souls" with shouted lead vocals, forceful back up choruses and churning guitar parts. The second tune from BBK is "For Sale" and this one has a tasteful guitar/vocal interplay. The third song from BBK is the strongest song yet! Read this: "Try to survive from 9 to 5/ Each and every day/ Support the wife, feed the children/ Life's struggle to get your pay/ So when you're old/ and look back/ You miss what you could've done/ It's not just a working class thing/ It happens to everyone/ Don't think that we don't understand/ This is just the beginning of the fuckin' end/ Never for us, that's what we said/ Too young to have a clue/ About taking the next step/ There's still much left to do/ In the end who's to say/ What is wrong and what is right/ No one is, so step aside/ We won't give up without a fight/ Don't think that we don't understand/ Together, united, we can make a stand/ Don't think that we don't understand/ This is just the beginning of the fucking end." "The Next Step" has a deep growl of a vocal and a dangerous quality to it that one might associate with the BRUISERS. This is a very strong first release from this fine new label! Contact the bands at www.angelfire.com/ns/beans, ghosttownpunx@hotmail.com, www.bbkpunk.nl, or at bootsman78@hotmail.com. Contact the label, Bart/PogoPunx, through bart@antidote.nl.

DEADFALL, San Francisco's new hardcore heroes have an EP out! This is a blistering eight song debut!! Nik and the boys plow through "Meathead," "Postal," "Blood Suckers," "C.C.H.C.," "Comfortable Life," their anthem—"Deadfall," "Beer Not Church," and "You Make Me Sick." This shit fucking thrashes your world! With great influences like POISON IDEA and NEGATIVE APPROACH, these guys take it to the next level. Read the lyrics to "Deadfall" (the anthem) by DEADFALL: "(Deadfall. Deadfall.)/ Everywhere I go, I sense a heavy weight looming over me/ Every move I make I know this deathtrap could fall at any time/ This pressure is too much for me—it fucks up my mind/ Watch your step/ Death comes without a warning/ The weight just falls—you never even see it coming/ You'll realize you're dead alive—You can't escape/ Now you resist, but it's fucking futile/ There is no way out/ (Deadfall. Deadfall)/ Everywhere I go I see a structure I know is coming down/ Every move I make I know this deathtrap could fall at any time/ This pressure is too much for me - I don't want to die/ This world is collapsing/ It's coming down on me/ I feel the pressure of a crumbling society/ Rubble pins me in this debris/ I can't escape/ I resist but it seems so futile." Fucking killer!!

Write to DEADFALL and Controlled by Plague Records at PO Box 22641, San Francisco, CA 94122; scottykarate@hotmail.com.

Yes! TKO Records has continued to re-release material from the vault of ANTiSEEN—those kings of wrestling punk and southern punk. The LP out this month is called *Southern Hostility*. It originally appeared on Todd Goss' Rave Records in 1995 and features some hits that you may have heard on TPOS Records or Mr. Goss' Jettison Records. You get "Death Train Coming," you get "Leeches and Losers," you get the fuckin' hammer of a song "Evil Rock n' Roll," written by GG ALLIN and Jeff Clayton. You get a cover of Malcom Tent's song "My God Can Beat Up Your God." Mr. Tent, President and founder of TPOS Records, in Connecticut, was an early supporter of ANTiSEEN. Mr. Tent's band BROKEN TALENT originally recorded "My God Can Beat Up Your God" and of course, Mr.'s Clayton and Young put their own evil bent on the tune. The song "Kill the Business" is a scathing indictment of the record industry. Listen to Joe Young's fuzzed out reverb guitar on this monumental track!! Fucking amazing! Side one wraps up with the apocalyptic "Last Days on Earth." Turn this timeless piece of rock history over and continue the carnage. "Old Man, Hit the Road" is brilliant! This is American rock and roll in it's purest state! Jeff Clayton offers up pearls of wisdom with his song "Watch the Bastard Fry." "Hate for Power" spews Joe Young's guitar venom all over your shoes. The politics of "Ivory Towers" come blaring out of your speakers. "Your ivory tower is gonna fall/ Build your tower to the sky/ You just do it/ You don't ask why/ The tower's going to fall to the ground." This rock n' roll is not for the weak at heart! Clayton and company finish off the *Southern Hostility* LP with "Self Destruction." Whew! Hard hitting shit here! Next Month look for a review of the reissue of the *Honor Among Thieves* LP. Order your *Southern Hostility* LP from: TKO Records, 3126 W. Cary St., #303, Richmond, VA 23221; www.tkorecords.com.

This month you fucks get bootleg reissues of two classic GG ALLIN seven inches, originally released on Orange Records from New York, New York. First you are treated to the early GG classic 45, "Gimme Some Head" backed with "Dead or Alive" - great! This fucker has Wayne Kramer on lead guitar and back-up vocals, Rob Basso on guitar, Alan Chapple on bass, and Dennis (Machine Gun) Thompson on drums. These guys kick ass! This shit as well as GG ALLIN's *Always Was, Is, and Always Shall Be* LP are essential listening for you scum rockers!

The second reissue by GG Allin is *Public Animal No. 1- You Hate Me and I Hate You*. This gem contains "Automatic" and "Assface" on he backside. At this point in his career, Mr. Allin was a punk rocker! If you don't know GG ALLIN from this era - get the bootlegs!

MIKE V AND THE RATS have a great seven inch EP out on Indecision Records. Mike Vallely, known for his skateboarding, is the lead singer and lyricist. Jason Hampton, the guitarist, writes the music. Side A starts with "Viewpoint," which is refreshingly positive take on society. Mike V. Refuses to believe "the prophets of doom who fill the world with despair." "Another City" is an interesting slow dirge/spoken piece. Flip this EP over and you'll hear "Never Give Up," which has some insightful lyrics—read on: "I'll never give in, I'll never, ever give up/ You come around here you forget how to act/ Singing your fiction off of the rack/ You put up a front to hide what you lack/ I just laugh at your pathetic attack/ I'll never give in, I'll never, ever give up/ Your role models, they sold you lies/ They told you it's cool to drink and get high/ It doesn't pay to be someone who buys/ Into the hype, open your eyes/ I see you, I hear you, I watch your parade/ And see right through the choices you've made/ You have no self respect but you're getting paid/ There's some things in life I'll never trade/ I'll never be bought, I'll

never be sold/ I'm glad to walk out here in the cold/ I don't have time to watch the drama unfold/ I've seen enough and it's getting old/ I'll never give in, I'll never, ever give up."

The last song is the grand finale—"The War." This is a discomforting slower piece of hard-to-digest gristle: "Did they get you to hate/ Did they destroy your faith/ Did they break your heart/ Tear your world apart/ Are you running scared and alone/ Are you without any place to call home/ Are you coming apart at the seams/ Are you disconnected/ Did they break you down to nothing/ Are the nails already in your coffin/ The war/ Did they shoot your heroes down/ Turn your hope into doubt/ Did they trample all of your dreams/ Take away your means/ Are you living in your own hell/ Are you without a soul to tell/ Are you screaming at a wall/ Are you disconnected/ You've got to stand up and stand strong/ You've got to keep on moving along/You've got to strive for something more/ This life is a mission."

This is a diverse and engaging punk rock record with bass-heavy music that moves from fast to slow with deep, ponderous lyrics. Overall effect—very good! Write to Indecision Records, PO Box 6052, Garden Grove, CA 92846; www,indecision-records.com.

BARSE, those irreverent English punks, have a new EP out on Rapid Pulse Records. BARSE, known for their pointed lyrics and associations with an unpleasant group of punks and skins, have a hit with this EP! BARSE remind one of THE DESPERATE BICYCLES or TELEVISION PERSONALITIES with more liquor and drugs involved. BARSE lead off side "A" with the title cut of the EP, "Council Estate." This is quite good actually! Flip this disc over and you get "Chelsea Bridge" which leads into "Everything's Pointless." This is a really good punk rock song! The lyrics are cynical and the guitars are relentless. First rate! Write to BARSE, 5 Pentlands Terrace, S. Stanley Co. Durham, DH 9 60 J, England; email: barse@durrtyred.fsnet.co.uk. Write to Rapid Pulse Records at PO Box 5075, Milford, CT 06460.

We've got a kick-ass EP in the new arrival bin by LAUKAUS on Distort Records, from NJ, USA. This is a Japanese band singing in the Finnish style, This shit starts thrashing the minute you put the fucking needle down on the record. On side "A," LAUKAUS tears through "Traditiot," "Vihaa" and "Muoti." Side two is more of the same mayhem. You get: "Tuho Ja Kuolema" (Death Sentence), "En Halua Enempaa Vapautta" and "Valta." All fast, all brutal, all punk as fuck! Write to Distort Records PO Box 3400, Wallington, New Jersey 07057, USA.

I.A.F. and RAHAKA from Spain and Finland take their wild ravings to new heights on this month's split EP. This music is frantic, fast hardcore with influences from MOB 47, KAAOS and RIISTETYT. The lyrics are overtly political: the bands are opposed to war, opposed to heroin use, opposed to selective breeding in humans. For the I.A.F./RAHAKKA split EP, contact Bad Society, c/o Roberto Garcia, Apdo 6213 41080, Sevilla, Spain; idiotizacion@hotmail.com, or Morbid Productions, c/o Leo Van Aerschot, Valimaankatu 7 A, 10/33500 Tampere, Finland; morbidprod2@hotmail.com.

Busted Heads Records from Sweden has an official reissue available of the classic raw Swedish hardcore of ARROGANTA AGITATORER from 1983. The EP is called *Arrogans*. The band formed in 1981 and played their first show in 1982. This EP contains the ten memorable tracks from two decades ago, including "Violence is the Only Solution," "Cut the Crap," and "Brainless Youth," plus one bonus track. This is some fast and urgent thrash from the halcyon days of Swedish hardcore. For the ARROGANTA AGITATORER reissue as well as D.S. 13 and ETA product, write to: Busted Heads Records, Box 275, 901 06 Umea, Sweden; www.ds13.com.

Weird System Records from Germany has a new seven inch compilation out called *Berlin Punk Rock 1977-1989, Berlin Frisbee #02*. This rocking little fucker starts with IXTOC-1 and their good song, "Nichts Geseh'n" and then slams into one of the earliest (and best) of the German punk groups, PVC, and a live version of "Ridin' on the 262" from 1977. Great! You finish off side one with ZERFALL and their tune, "Irrenhaus". Side "B" punks out from the onset with ZERSTORTE JUGEND and the song, "Kaiser Wilhelm." Next up you have the fine melodic punk drippings of BETENCOMBO and their number "Fair Fuck" from 1980. TEMPO does "Waiting for the Eighties." SQUANDERED MESSAGE finished the EP off with "Linus von Skateboard." Write to Weird System, Alsterwiete 32, 20009, Hamburg, Germany; www.weirdsystem.de.

Transparent Records from Michigan has a nice package for you this month. This double 7" compilation is called *Mechanized Death—A Tribute to the Accused*. You get ACCUSED covers by a stellar collection of bands: PSYCHOSOMATIC doing "Wrong Side of the Grave"; PBR STREETGANG doing "Martha Splatterhead"; VICTORY FLAG doing "Deception", DISEPTIKONS doing "Scared of the Dark"; NEW JACOBIN CLUB doing "Judgement Day"; TINGLER doing "Splatter Rock", DIZZY DIZZY MKII doing "The Corpse Walks" and JUST ANOTHER FACE doing "War = Death 88." This is a very entertaining compilation! Send $5 ppd to Transparent, c/o Paul Holstein. 6759 Transparent, Clarkston, MI 48346, USA.

Until next month,

See you fucks at the bar!

It's fucking freezing. For fuck's sake I live in fucking California, and here I sit wearing two pairs of pants, three pairs of socks, three t-shirts, one sweatshirt, a friggin stocking cap (*not* a "tuke" or however the fuck you spell it), and I'm freezing my fucking face off. The locals keep mocking my complaints—"You're from *Ohio*..." As if that is somehow supposed to make me immune to the near Ice Age-like conditions that exist at Fortress Maximus Rocknrollicus. Lucky for my toes' survival, Clara and I finally figured out how to work the rather archaic and cryptic wood-burning stove, so I think I'll survive yet another seemingly temperate—but actually quite brutal—San Francisco winter here at *MRR*.

Speaking of ye old zine, in case you haven't been paying much attention, or you're one of those folx who haven't picked up a copy in some time, this year has been fairly crazy. Our flight from Mordam, in the wake of their willingness to deal with majors, being the biggest chaos-inducing re-adjustment around here—one which had the potential to sink this venerable institution of punk rock mayhem, but one which I feel we are weathering quite well. Words almost cannot convey how much we appreciate the support and help of punks from around the world. All the letters and emails of confirmation that we did the right thing have certainly been quite the moral boost needed after many insane days of boxing up zines in addition to the madness of trying to assemble this, the only punk zine that *actually* matters. Personally I'd like to thank Var, Jennifer, and No Idea for all the help to get this insane idea off the ground. Kathleen, Tracie, and Cookie at Big Top for putting up with my insanity and chaotic mannerisms. Bob Suren (Sound Idea) for being the most trustworthy person in punk rock. Dave from Fracture/Assembly Line for being amazingly supportive of what we do and for putting out the new No Choice CD. You know what... turn to page six of this zine, see all those people? They rule. Without all of them, and people like them, punk rock means nothing. Without them, we might not still exist. Support them. Punk isn't about and shouldn't be about hero worship, rock stars or standing around waiting for someone else to do all the work for you. It's about you and me taking back control. It's about supporting one another and it's about cooperation with each other cause we are the fucking punx. And that is what we have done, and will continue to do. Yes sir, up the fucking punx!

Endnotes:

1) If you see Dave Hyde, hit 'im. and then kick 'im in da 'ead.

2) I believe that number two would be considered "doing a runner."

3) I tell you—despite about two months of severe depression, almost dying from pneumonia, maintaining a near constant state of fatigue, the realization that I'm starting to go bald and being stressed out to the point that I feel like my body is one giant ulcer—2002 has been one of the better years I've ever had.

4) I can be contacted via the *MRR* PO Box. I like Spanish punk and am looking for a MG-15 shirt, size large. Those who are in league with the devil, or who don't want to send me free shit can email me at mikethorn@maximumrocknroll.com

SUBTERRANEAN
MAIL ORDER

AUTOMATICS "The Missing Album" LP
Recorded in 1978 but never released due to an aborted deal with Island Records, this is a full LP from the UK punk/powerpop band that did the "When the Tanks Roll Over Poland" 7" that was comped on "England Belongs to Me vol. 3." Deluxe foil-stamped full color sleeve, UK import.
LP $12.60

VIOLENT RAMP s/t 7"
A side project from the WOLF EYES crew, this is total shredding skatecore thrash, brutal and raw as fuck. 5 songs, with the lyrics on the inside and cover photo of a skater in midair above the drummer's head at a show!
7" $4.60

THE DOUBT "Contrast Disorder" LP
Nasty, lo-fi teen grind on this Northern Ireland punk gem from 1981. This band did release one album, but this isn't it. Instead, what we have here is a previously unreleased studio session plus the tracks from their one great 7" release. Italian import.
LP $12.60

CONFLICT "The Ungovernable Force" LP
Formed in 1981 by vocalist Colin Jerwood, Conflict was not merely a band, but a group of individuals who saw their music as a means of communicating an anti-establishment political agenda driven by a total rejection of Thatcherism, nuclear power, vivisection, police brutality, etc. This album is the band's magnum opus and, decades later, is still fiercely relevant. In the words of Conflict: Only direct action can prevent World War 3. Gatefold sleeve, Italian import.
LP $9.60

"WHO? WHAT? WHY? WHEN? WHERE?" comp. LP
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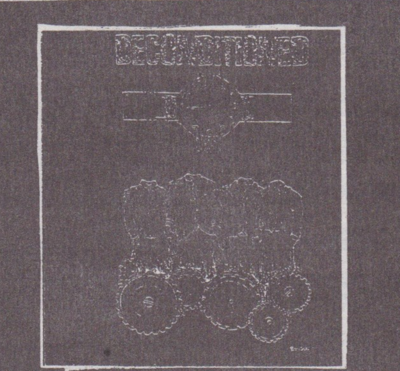

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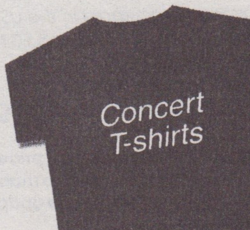

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TOP TEN PUNK RECORDS OF 2002

RYAN WELLS

Strange year for the Up and Down. Rock had it's every- seven-years 'we're not dead yet' revival party via the WHITE STRIPES, THE HIVES, etc. At least this time around the hype machine has largely ignored the music that is nearest and dearest to the hearts to most of you slobs. Now bands that want to sell out have to move faster, be a little more pro-active (to use an old dated term from the 90's, remember that sorry decade?) and hustle the learning curve the fuck up. No more building a following in the indie punk circuit over five or so albums before reaching: "Oh, okay, we'll sign, we've reached the limits here." Now, it's put out a demo that the right people hear and away we go. The possibilities for the truly photogenic musical folk among us are as tempting as that little golden ring hanging under the hobbit's dirty tunic. Which makes the enormous resurgence of the 1981-84 hardcore sound at this exact moment in history "ironic on so many levels dude!" In some ways this was one of the strongest explosions of pure gunk spread over the little subdivisions of the punk universe in twenty years. Now if only someone would revive the concept behind the "Life Sucks/Is Boring/Is Ugly" series of compilations on New Alliance we'd be close to achieving orbit! In no order...

FM KNIVES - "Useless and Modern" CD
Perfect blend of catchiness and guitar power without dipping into the bag 'o sticky goo that ruins many bands labeled as 'pop punk'. The 'pop' resides in the fact that they have good songs that rock, the 'punk' part in their influences which run the gamut from BUZZCOCKS (2nd album) to PVC to NERVES to the legions of great bands that have run out of the Sacto sore for the last ten years. Out of print on Moo La La at the moment, look for it on Broken Rekkids in a month or two.

INCONTROLLADOS - s/t 7"
Seriously, this 7" would be equally at home on the *Bloodstains Across Denmark* comp or on one of the *Killed By Hardcore* comps. The guitar is a consistently itchy annoyance that works perfectly in a totally timeless way. Can't catch a word, but that sound of people being annoying...

KNAUGHTY KNIGHTS - s/t 7"
Yes, this is sort of a dumb record to put on a Top Ten seeing as how it was limited to somewhere less than 300 copies on an obscure Italian label, but if some of the hottest garage punk of the year is gonna trap itself on a collector's postage stamp, oh well. Ex-OBLIVIANS get their Ya-Yas, their Bad Selves and probably their Ex-Girlfriends out of their systems on a real muddy howler of a classic 7". Hey, mine don't skip!

BAD TIMES - s/t LP
Some of the strongest hard-assed punk tracks of the year are on here. Listening to the whole thing without pain meds nearby may be a stretch, but in limited doses this fucking thing can break hearts, leases, land speed records, what have you. Essential bad trip.

POPULAR SHAPES/INTELLIGENCE - split 7"
Great confused echoing repetitive mess. There were a lot of great echoey messes made this year, this one is just good enough over both sides on all four songs to triumph.

PIRANHAS - "Erotic Grit Movies" LP
The other Wince-Factor Nine LP of the year, the PIRANHAS returned from the dead to stare through windows at the living once more. Best dramatic use of synth in a punk rock recording. Creepy locking eyes with this one, but it's really you you're looking at! Do you dare...yes...turn out the lights stupid!

A FRAMES - s/t LP
The best hand-made robot punk longplayer of the year, and there were a lot of attempts at a 'definitive' robot punk LP this particular year. Smarter, sharper and longer lasting than the rest. If you could actually find one, lucky you!

SUBTONIX - "Too Cool For School" 7"
Their LP was shrill, thin and not so hot, but this 7" was the perfect headstone for this local gang of drama queens. Both songs are hot, hot, hot, in a sort of clammy no wave kind of way. This is what 7" records are supposed to be about, drama, confusion and quick jabs to the neck. And wily saxophones.

INTELLECTUALS - s/t 7"
Hate Records put out a great four-peat set of 7", and this was the pick of the litter. Skinny ties can't hide those nasty stains, kids. Nothing brain-shattering, just a duo of clued-in Eyetalians playing to the absolute limit of their abilities. Punk as fuck, you poser!

ORIGINAL POLKITCH - s/t 7"
Talk about your revolutions, a Top Ten by me without a pile of dominating Japanese records on it. How times have changed, they just don't itch to do records in America no more. Here's the lone entry, 4 tracks of mangled English and mangled strings. Definitely blood on the mixing desk, as this is one Japanese band that must have blown their tight-assed engineer's brains out to achieve some decent sonic shittiness. Other than GUITAR WOLF and the KING BROTHERS, I haven't heard a good messed up garage punk record like this out of Japan in at least five years...

Honorable mention: **FLAKES** 7" on Hate, the **TOTALITAR** side of the split 7" on Prank, the stupidly limited **JUMPIN BEANS** LP on Ball, the **BARSE** 7" on Rapid Pulse, the **DUCHESS OF SAIGON** 7" on SS, the **HUL** LP on 9 Lives, the **MYSTERY GIRLS** 7" on Bancroft, the **FIRESTARTER** 7" on Mangrove, the **ACCIONE MUTANTE** 7" on Ken Rock and the trend towards reissuing great 7" instead of burying them on bad comps, with the label Last Year's Youth (buy the **GROUT** reissue 7", oh my god!) establishing the standard for quality.

MIKE THORN - Year End Top "Ten"

Okay, okay—so once again it is nearly impossible for me to narrow this down to just ten releases. I find myself being more and more pissed off these days, and I think a lot of the music I listen to is a reflection of that. There's plenty to be pissed about these days—if your not, well then I suppose your just not paying much attention (as the saying goes). That said I would like to see more songs about smashing bottles and less songs from East Coast sXe bands about beating up/stalking/threatening their ex-girlfriends. Anyways here we go again, once again in no particular order—loud, proud and punk!

LPs:

WORLD BURNS TO DEATH - "Sucking Of The Missile Cock" LP
A near perfect mix of D-beat punk ala the classic Swedish model, with venomous social commentary, combined with a bizarre mixture of Japanese and Texas over the top outrageousness.

TRAGEDY- "Vengeance" LP
This record represents takes all the lessons of the last 25 years of punk, combines them and takes it to the next level. Absolutely crushing and splendid amalgamation of Burning Spirits style Japanese hardcore (ala JUDGEMENT/NIGHTMARE/early FORWARD) with elements lifted from every significant punk band from the last 25 years. Brilliant and the sheer definition of intensity.

ACURSED - "Livet Är Den Längsta Vägen Till Helvetet" LP

WOLFBRIGADE-"Progression/Regression" LP

SKITSYSTEM - "Enkel Resa Till Rännstenen" LP
Hands down three of the most brutal records to come out ever. All absolutely relentless from start to finish—and all three taking the classic Swedish hardcore sound, and putting a modern twist on it. Totally amazing stuff here, totally classic albums.

V/A - "Histeria" LP
Finally, someone does a comp that is worth owning! A who's who of modern hardcore (SEEIN RED, ESPERANZA, LIFES HALT, DS13, LIMP WRIST etc.) and not a dud on it. A must own if no other reason than it contains the best LIMP WRIST song.

ATROCIOUS MADNESS - "Total Control" LP

DISCLOSE - "Apocalypse Of Death" 12"
Both of these records get the award for most distorted mayhem. A combination of DISORDER, DISCHARGE, CONFUSE, GAI and GUDON to create a delightfully distorted romp. Music to make your ears bleed combined with sharp tongued reminders of the war machine which surrounds us.

YOUNG WASTENERS - "We Got Ways"
Four young lads from Copenhagen get together to create one powerful raw punk record—chock full of snot, piss and vinegar. Taking the model set down by early TSOL, BAD RELIGION and DEAD KENNEDYS and improving on it.

JABARA - "Why We Wish" LP
Many thanks are due once again to Mr. Ken Sanderson and his Prank records for making this amazing Japanese CD only release available to us vinyl snobs. Full throttle Japanese punk attack—brutal guitar attack, snarled vocals—awesome!

Runners Up:
DILLINGER FOUR-"Situationist Comedy"
NO PARADE - "Ceaseless Fire" LP
MUSTANG - "Freestyle"LP
KOBAYASHI - "Disko" LP
SHARP KNIFE - "51 Alameda" LP
VIRUS - "Nowhere To Run" LP

EPs:

TRAGEDY - "Can We Call This Life?" EP
More melodic than there other releases—this single presents to you TRAGEDY taking the simple three chord song and turning it into a driving anthem in the form of the track "The Ending Fight." One of those records that will stand the test of time.

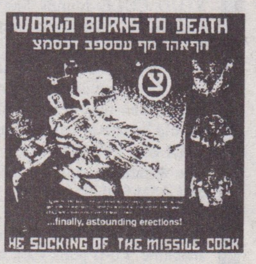
TOTALITÄR - "Allting Ar Palatsas" EP
MEANWHILE - "The Show Must Go On"
Two EPs chock full of raw Scandi-punk. Personally I feel that if you *don't* like these singles, you probably don't have much of a punk bone in your body.

SMALLTOWN - "Fall In Line" EP
Smalltown continues to impress on this there second single, with there bitterly melodic ala NEWTOWN NEUROTICS or STIFF LITTLE FINGERS punk attack. Once again, another record for the punk history books.

THE AWAKENING - "Burning Wind" EP
Brutal Midwestern punk rock from these three gentlemen from Columbus, Ohio. I love this record so much that it hurts.

AMDI PETERSENS ARMÉ - "Blod Ser Mere Virkeligt Ud Pa Film" EP
Total BLACK FLAG meets early Dischord worship going on here from these New Wave obsessed Danes. Too bad they are no longer with us, but I'm happy they got to tour the US at least once before breaking up. Heard they've already got a bunch of new projects going, so be on the lookout!

BORN/DEAD - "24 Hostages" EP
DEADFALL - "Meathead" EP
In case you don't already know, the Bay Area is currently have a boom period in punk bands, lotsa bands playing around—and more importantly lotsa *really great* bands playing around. BORN/DEAD play driving punk in a very CRUCIFIX meets CHRIST ON PARADE sort of way, while DEADFALL continue to tear up the Bay Area with their URBAN WASTE meets STRAIGHT AHEAD attack.



INFECT - "Estrepito" EP
These four sXe Brazilian ladies blasted all of our senses this year with this their second EP (still looking for a copy of the first one!). Fast as fuck Lärm meets STRAIGHT AHEAD hardcore with critical lyrics. Gimme more, now!
DISKORDS - "Heart Full Of Napalm" EP
Four young Portland punks, all around the age of 13 produced this amazing four song single. Classic snotty punk. Fuck yes!
LAUKAUS - "Mikä On Tuolla?" EP
Wow. Japanese band playing in style that sounds like every Finnish band smooshed into one—elements of LAMA, RATTUS, KAAOS, APPENDIX, etc. sneak in every track. Fucking killer from start to finish!
Runners Up:
QUEER WÜLF - "Cockroach City" EP
INCONTROLLADOS - "Hvem Vil Det Gavne?" EP
SIDA/DESTRUCION-split EP
POLIKARPA Y SUS VICIOSAS - "Globalizacion" EP
APATIA NO!/RASH - split EP

CAROLYN KEDDY

TYRADES - "I Got A Lot" 7"
One of the many shames of the SF punk scene this year was the poor attendance at the TYRADES' October show. It was one of the best shows I've seen this year. For months everyone has been trying to convince me that the latest trend of JOSIE COTTON wannabes is cool. Doesn't anyone remember *Valley Girl*? JOSIE COTTON was the band at the Valley High's prom. Surely, any '80s loving fashion punk poseur didn't want to emulate the Valley kids. It confuses me. I think people should change their attitude, get a clue and start kissing the TYRADES asses. This is what punk and new wave and rock should be now. The Tyrades came to SF and played an amazing show. Singer Jenna stands on stage with an air of BLACK FLAG-era Rollins and belts out tunes with her amazing voice. The band has such a great style: simplistic, staticy, new-wavy punk. It's one of those shows people will talk about years later and everyone will pretend that they were there. Warning, I have a photographic memory and I know where you weren't that night. The TYRADES released two 7"s this year and even though both are great (as is their first 7" on Big Neck), I am picking this release because it has my favorite Tyrades song "Mr. So N So" on it. Great catchy lyrics (what I think I can make out of them), a sing-a-long chorus and a snarling punk attitude. The two other songs are great too. Now where's an LP?
TRAMPS - s/t CD
Fantastic. Lead singer and guitarist Ayn is an amazing singer and a great guitar player. Poppy garage punk songs about getting drunk, lusting after boys and not giving a fuck about anything else.
OKMONIKS - "Rock 'N' Roll With The Okmoniks" 7"
Excellent female fronted, organ driven '60s rock madness. Three great catchy songs.
MR. CALIFORNIA AND THE STATE POLICE - "(I'm Gonna Kick You In The Head)" CD
Is this man a genius or an idiot? Who cares when you get great half-minute songs like "Punk Rock Aerobics", "Poser", "Liquor Store", "Black Flag Tattoo", "Vegan Delight" and "Mohawk Hater"? An amazing one band, he performs like no one else and really rocks my world.
CHEATER SLICKS - "Yer Last Record" LP
CHEATER SLICKS continue to get better with every release, yet have decided to tell all the losers who just don't get it to fuck off by calling quits. Their best record to date, Yer Last Record contains the best song of their career, "Please Explain It". Every time I hear the wonderful guitars on that song my day gets better.
STUD COLE - "Burn Baby Burn" CD
It may be a reissue, but it's new to me. I love this so much. STUD COLE sounds like a satanic version of ELVIS PRESLEY. Thank you Norton.
BAD TIMES - s/t LP
Such an all-star line up! Eric Oblivian, Jay Reatard and King Louie get drunk and record some songs. I wish I was there when they recorded this. Exactly what punk rock should be about, having fun and rocking out.
LILI Z - "s/t" 10"
The wonderful guitarist Lili Z. of the NO TALENTS and SPLASH FOUR. Not only is she one of my favorite guitar players, but she has a great voice too. Eight songs recorded in her bedroom with a four-track and a drum machine. Lo-fi punk rock in the best possible way. Great songs too.
FM KNIVES - "Useless And Modern" CD
This is what retro new wave should be aiming for. FM KNIVES sound like Feargal Sharkey fronting the BUZZCOCKS. Great catchy songs.

MR. AIRPLANE MAN - "Moanin'" LP
A great year for female rockers. (Note: there are five on this list). This is the second record from this great two-woman band. The songs are slow and moody and really get to me. I like listening to this first thing in the morning before all the day's bullshit starts.
Other records I loved this year:
BASEBALL FURIES "Greater Than Ever" LP
COACHWHIPS "Get Your Body Next To Mine" LP
COOL JERKS "Cleaned A Lot Of Plates In Memphis" LP
DAN MELCHIOR'S BROKE REVUE "Bitterness, Spite, Rage and Scorn" LP
FEEDERZ "Vandalism: Beautiful As A Rock In A Cop's Face" LP
HENRY FIAT'S OPEN SORE "Alan Smithee" 10"
KONKS "Three Mile Baby" 7"
ROCK 'N' ROLL ADVENTURE KIDS "Live On Berzerkeley Radio" LP

ELLIOTT LANGE

First, let me just say that ROTTEN SOUND's 'Murderworks', KALIBAS's 'Product of Hard Living' and FALL SILENT's 'Drunken Violence' were some of my favorite records this year, but were for whatever reason unable to be included on this list. I strongly urge you to seek out these records, in particular ROTTEN SOUND- without a doubt, the single fastest band currently living on earth. Bands of this ilk *PLEASE* send your records in for review so as to be eligible for inclusion next year. Now on to the arbitrary rankings:
SAYYADINA/BRUCE BANNER - split 7" & s/t 7" & tracks on "Polar Grinder" comp (all Putrid Filth Conspiracy)
In my opinion, the best grindcore band to emerge worldwide in the last 5 years. Their speed is unlike anything save ROTTEN SOUND. Their samples kick ass, their lyrics are intelligent, their guitar sound is pure Swedish death metal all the way, and the drumming's so fast it's hard to get your brain around at first. Just get any- and everything you see from these Swedish lads- they will be huge soon.
PAGE NINETY-NINE / MAJORITY RULE split CD (Robo Dog)
These two bands are emblematic of the current scene that for once in my life is making me proud to admit I am from Virginia. Along with THE INDEX, CITY OF CATERPILLAR, PIG DESTROYER (granted disparate styles), there is finally something worth going home for in the State for Lovers. Probably my favorite PAGE 99 tracks including the dream-like beauty of the bass riff at the end of "Tantrum". MAJORITY RULE are a sheer maelstrom of original *DARK* hardcore. I knew when I first heard this, and didn't initially like it, that it would take several listens for it all to sink in, and when it finally did, they knocked me over the head with their unconventional arrangements and bona-fide spooky guitar parts.
GRIDE / COCKROACH - split 7" (k.a.z. re-chords)
Unfortunately Jeff never did get the "Happy Birthday" 7" from GRIDE back in stock in the Six Weeks distro. Many a long night I stayed up counting the seconds click by ever so slowly in anticipation of its return to Jeff's cornucopia of vinyl delight, but alas my reprieve was ne'er in site. Jeff, I am forever forlorn. So instead I had to make due with but a single side from the best band in the Czech Republic on this split. I could care less about the COCKROACH side- but the GRIDE material is so amazing, if they released a double album of Amish harvest favorites with just these 4 songs mixed throughout it'd be worthwhile. Top-notch grind, insane drumming, great vocals, and I love the way they incorporate occasional melody into the grind.
STRUCTURE OF LIES/IRANACH split CD & "Abacus" EP (both Deep Six)
Ex-UNRUH folk take what they were getting at in UNRUH and realize it in full-bore death metal. Excellent arrangements and about a dozen riffs per song. ABACUS even had some straight up MEGADETH parts. And as for vocals- it's usually hard to distinguish metalcore voices, but this guy's screams are the harshest I've heard in recent memory- just relentless throughout. IRANACH, now defunct, from New Hampshire, also weigh in with some pummeling DISGORGE-style gurgling death metal.
THE RED CHORD - "Fused Together in Revolving Doors" (Robo Dog)
Since CREATION IS CRUCIFIXION didn't release an album this year, the tech-metal award goes to Boston's RED CHORD. Just barely keeping it together long enough to have single cohesive songs, this is my pick for time-change-every-three-seconds, stop / start, math - death - hardcore record of 2002.

CATHETER - "Preamble To Oblivion" LP (Six Weeks)
The best American straight-up grindcore band still alive currently (now that DISCORDANCE AXIS is dead). These guys slay live, their lyrics have me silently yelling 'Fuck Yeah!' in my cubicle every time, and their blasts are dead-on every time.
CALIGARI - s/t (Init Records)
The only metal-core band in recent memory to really move me. These North Dakota kids (I hate to keep making a big deal about where they're from, but North Dakota- fuck, might as well be Ulan Bator) embarrass every band on Ferret or Trustkill. Unfortunately now dead, this band's creative use of guitar effects, lyrical refrains and dark midpace brutality was a welcome surprise that was in my cd player way more than I thought it would be.
ALL IS SUFFERING - "The Past: Vindictive Sadisms of Petty Bureaucrats" (Crucial Blast)
Another record that had to grow on me- after seeing my review of it in print a couple months ago I thought, "Damn, I wish I'd given it a better review." The review was good, but this is great. I even thought of a witty catch phrase for it: "His Hero Has Gone Death-Metal". Ha. This shit is seriously incredibly over-the-top intense- everything you love about HIS HERO IS GONE style hardcore, mixed with the speed and heaviness of MORBID ANGEL and MARDUK.
IRON LUNG - "Demonstrations in Pressure and Volume" 7" (625)
Damaging grind/hardcore from Reno. The horrific old-school medical equipment imagery and lyrical themes profoundly disturbed me, more than any CARCASS-wanna-be's could hope to achieve. Jensen's drumming and vocals are awe-inspiring, the songs are oddly constructed and unpredictable, and- ok, you wanna know the real reason this 7" is on my list? It came with an *official* IRON LUNG Tour Syringe. I'm sold.
THE INDEX/UNHOLY GRAVE split 7" (Deathstill) and Unmade CD (Anesthesia)
Richard from ENEMY SOIL slows things down a bit but makes them way heavier in his new band. Their bursts into the grind parts are all the better after the still-pretty-cool midpace metal parts- making for just more memorable songs overall. Plus they're rad live. The UNHOLY GRAVE tracks on the 7" are also, you know, good. See you next year

WILL RISK

QUEER WÜLF - "Cockroach City" EP
In the past few years, I have made an effort to seek out every record put out by the Chattanooga, Tennessee based This Here Records. This Here does a great job of documenting bands of the Chattanooga scene. Most of the records are of gritty melodic punk bands, the kind who might end up on No Idea Records if they were from Florida. I have yet to acquire a bad This Here record. Favorites include JACK PALANCE BAND, JARVIS, FORCED VENGEANCE, HELLO SHITTY PEOPLE, and THE MORONS, among many others. So when the QUEER WÜLF record was released, I had high expectations. I was not prepared for the record, though. You can feel the energy from the first chord hit, and the songs have everything I want from a punk band. They feel like they will fall apart at any moment, but don't. The songs are intensely melodic, but you get the idea that they have been listening to as much MINOR THREAT as they have CRIMPSHRINE. Most of all, the songs are not formulaic. While I spend a lot of my time happily listening to bands that recreate the sounds of the bands they love, I rarely come across a band I like that amazes me in a whole new way. QUEER WÜLF is one of those bands. My band was lucky enough to play in Chattanooga with both them and JACK PALANCE BAND, and QUEER WÜLF was amazing live. Fun, shit drunk and great. This may be my favorite record since the HICKEY/VOODOO GLOW SKULLS split 7".
THIS BIKE IS A PIPE BOMB - "Front Seat Solidarity" LP
The band is from Pensacola, Florida, they have no-hawks, they tour constantly, they play folk-punk-country, they are awesome people, they have no-hawks, every song of this LP has been stuck in my head at one point, they are inspiring to us all, and they have no-hawks. This LP, their second full length, is start-to-finish great. I don't know how they write songs that good. If you want to dance.
AGAINST ME - "Reinventing Axl Rose" LP
AGAINST ME!'s first two 7"s impressed the shit out of me. I love them. The strained vocals rising high above the acoustic guitars and simple drums caught my attention as soon as I had heard the first note of the first EP. I had high

hopes for this LP. At first I was disappointed. The album seemed rushed, there were redone versions of songs which I thought had been done perfectly the first time around, and the newer songs I didn't think sounded quite as good. But in anticipation of their trip out to California, I kept listening to the album. And I fell in love with the album. The lyrics were sung passionately and the new electric guitars and fuller drumming made for something, which seemed like it would make for a great live show. I sang along to this album over and over again because I could relate to the lyrics very much at the time. They use words and imagery in ways that make the songs very real and personal. In all AGAINST ME! seems like some great combination, musically of BILLY BRAGG, THE CLASH, THE (YOUNG) PIONEERS, and AMERICAN STEEL, with the ethics of an anarchist G'N'R loving Ian Mackaye (I think that works). Although still not my favorite AGAINST ME! release, this album is a great one which I will be listening to for at least the next thirty years. Don't let AGAINST ME! be one of those bands you ignore because of all the hype. It is well deserved.

HICKEY - "Various States of Disrepair: 1994-1996" CD

It is hard for anyone to write about HICKEY and do them justice. HICKEY, a band that existed in San Francisco, California from 1994-1997, is not a band that can be easily explained. Musically, they were a mix of simple melody and pure kick-butt-ism. They are understood mostly through their songs, their live shows (a few of which are luckily taped for us), and stories. The stories are plentiful. Everyone who was around the band has at least one good HICKEY story. I don't like to separate people into categories, but to be honest, there are those who understand HICKEY and those who don't. And I hardly waste my time on those who don't understand them at this point. The band released one album and a slew of split 7"'s and songs on compilations. This CD, which compiles most of the 7" and compilation tracks, was originally released in 1997 on Poverty Records, and was thankfully re-released this year by S.P.A.M. Records. The CD has most of their best stuff, but then 98% of their stuff was their best stuff. I don't know how to make this any clearer. HICKEY is my favorite band ever. Rest in peace, Matty Luv.

QUEST FOR QUINTANA ROO - "Things to Remember" EP

When I was fifteen, some friends of mine began playing as a band called QUEST FOR QUINTANA ROO. The band always amazed me. They were, without a doubt, the best band of kids our age and to me one of the best bands I had ever seen. They inspired me and all my friends to no end. The songs they wrote were actually songs, which were written and which had form, and were not just some chords thrown together. The songs were played more intensely than anything I had seen coming from kids my age. They played some kind of music (punk rock? Hardcore?) which was maybe similar to the likes of SAETIA, TWELVE HOUR TURN, or INDIAN SUMMER. I really don't know, I don't listen to much of that stuff. All I know is that I loved the band and followed them to most of their shows, including on a US/Canadian tour. Their sound progressed rapidly in their three years, and although I love nearly every song they recorded, this record showed the band as they were when they called it quits. It is a beautiful record in all aspects: music, lyrics, packaging, etc. Real, unpretentious, intense music that brought the house down.

LOS CRUDOS - "Discography" CD

Oh, the bands I didn't get to see live. LOS CRUDOS, who ranks among my favorite punk rock bands ever, did a lot of us a favor this year by releasing a CD, which includes everything song the band recorded. And I tell ya, nearly all the songs are keepers, all seventy four of them. CRUDOS addressed problems in their neighborhood, their lives, and in the greater world in a way that attacked the problems, but showed hope. They lacked the self-righteous attitude that so many hardcore punk bands have. There was such intensity to the music, the words, the live shows (hey, I got videotapes). Original CRUDOS records were at many times extravagantly packaged, and works of art themselves. Although it is hard to recreate this in a CD insert, the insert is packed full of lyrics, photos, and artwork, and is beautifully done. The kids agree, CRUDOS is a must.

THE MOUNTAIN GOATS - "All Hail West Texas" CD

What is punk rock to you? Who cares? A lot of people seem to. I know what it is to me. It is an attitude and a feeling that I get from music and the way that those involved conduct themselves. And to me, The MOUNTAIN GOATS are a punk rock band. However, they sound very little like most punk rock bands. That is because The MOUNTAIN GOATS are made up of one man with a nasally voice and his guitar. It is no side project or one off featuring an aging punk who can't keep a band together. The MOUNTAIN GOATS began as a man in is bedroom recording on 4 tracks and releasing tapes, and that was twelve years ago. They are a testament to the case that punk is not as much a genre of music as it is an attitude. This album is among the band's best. If you want to hear an interpretation of punk rock that is different than what *MRR*'s review policy allows, or if you just need a break from the flood of GODSTOMPER and UNHOLY GRAVE records that you have to review, check this album out.

SCHOLASTIC DETH - "Revenge of the Nerds" EP

SCHOLASTIC DETH was one of the most exciting things to happen to me last year. It was such a fucking treat to be able to see them play all the time, and I miss them so much. They released three EP's almost in succession, and although it is hard to beat the first EP, this (their second) was fucking great. Musically, they were so tight and so intense. And their shows were fun, which was a nice change from hardcore shows where you it feels more like a high school football game. They came, rocked us for about a year, and left. Damn.

THE INSURGENT - "Loudest Letter" EP

THE INSURGENT, based out of Long Island and Boston (although we got one of them held hostage out here in the Bay Area) has been rocking my world for a quite a few years at this point. Their 10" from a few years ago is flawless and brilliant. The four songs on this EP are of higher caliber, which I thought would be hard to do. The music just fucking explodes out of your speakers about 5 seconds into the record. God! They do melodic punk rock like it should be done. It is high energy and raw, but tuneful and stuck in your head. For me, their energy brings to mind late eighties East Bay stuff like OPERATION IVY. This record is so so good. Go!

I started with a list about of about 70 or so records, narrowed it down to twenty five or so, and then down to ten. But I couldn't let this pass with at least mentioning the following records which are nearly as special, if not as special, to me as those which made the "Top 10."

Honorable Mention CALVARY - "Outnumbered is Outflanked" LP, HOLDING ON/COALITION split EP, TEAR IT UP - "Nothing to Nothing" LP, THE AWAKENING - "The Final Feast" EP, TRAGEDY - "Can We Call This Lice?" EP, DYSTROPHY - "We're Nice Kids" EP, FLESHIES - "Futbol" EP, THE ATTACK - "Mental Health" EP, NEGATIVE STEP - "Conquering Punk" 10", FEEDERZ Reissues, "MEMENTO MORI" LP

ROB COONS

DROP DEAD/TOTALITAR - split CD/7" EP

This is some out of control shit here! DROP DEAD knocks an atomic bomb of pain onto your head with six blistering songs of new material. They haven't lost an ounce of rage or energy since the very first time I heard them. These hypersonic songs average around 45 seconds apiece with Bob's face-melting vocals spitting venom at everything in sight. Absolutely incredible! TOTALITAR follow DROP DEAD with three songs of pounding crust from Sweden. Both bands kill it on this release, but in my opinion DROP DEAD really rises to the top here. Now if I could only convince them to come back out for another West Coast tour.

LUDICRA - "Hollow Psalms" CD

Though this CD did not get an "official" review within the pages of MRR it did make it into my column and that is good enough for me. Don't kid yourself here, this is goat horns in the air, head-banging metal. It is obvious they are influenced by many of the greats from the Scandinavian black metal scene. The songs here are dark and blasphemous as the band rolls through everything from full-on blast beats to slow guttural gloom and doom. Laurie Sue's shrill ear-splitting vocals will send chills down your spine if the thundering music doesn't crush it first. The production is top notch and the digipack CD is really sharp looking. I think that LUDICRA is the best metal band that the Bay Area has seen in a long fucking time. A must hear!

INFEST - "No Mans Slave" LP

Jesus F'n Christ, where did this one come from?! Just when you thought you had heard all that INFEST had to offer, Bob from Deep Six drops this load on your head like a ton of bricks from 40 stories up. By now most of you know the story. These songs were recorded back in 1995 and then the vocals were laid down a few years later. These guys kicked down the door of hardcore starting all the way back in the late 80's with the release of their first EP. It took many more years for them to ever get their due, but they are now recognized as one of the forefathers of the modern hardcore/thrash movement. It says a lot for a band that isn't even together anymore to put out a release that blows the doors off of most of the current bands playing similar styles of music. These tunes are fast as fuck and loaded with enough pain and anger to push them totally over the top. Amazing release!

V/A - "Barbaric Thrash Demolition" Dbl. CD + ASOCIAL - "Demos" EP

I am such a sucker for compilations because not only is it a good way to get exposure to new bands, but when most if not all of the bands are good on the compilation it can make for a really incredible release. This is why the Barbaric Thrash Demolition compilations are just so damn good. This one kills it with an onslaught of "all go no slow" tracks from a ton of bands. Some of the band that you may have heard of are: SHORT FUSE, OXBAKER, BRUCE BANNER, FACE UP TO IT, HAYMAKER, SHANK, TRI-STATE KILLING SPREE and KILLED IN ACTION. Not only is this compilation great but Max threw in an additional EP containing the 1982 demo from the almighty ASOCIAL. This Swedish band blows through track after track of raw blasting thrash. Hard to believe the ASOCIAL recording is 20 years old!

SCHOLASTIC DETH - "Killed By School" EP

Damn, when did these guys get so fucking good? I mean the first two EP's they put out where awesome in their own right. But on this record they take it to another level. It

seems like they just said, "fuck it" let's play faster and harder than we have ever played.... and hey while we're at it lets distort the fuck out of everything and throw in lots of feedback and make an epic record. It is no joke when I say *Killed By School* is possibly the best song I have heard all year! And the energy level on all of these songs is pegged to ten the whole way through (all men on ten). For those of you who were lucky enough to attend their last show in SF were treated to an amazing day of sweat, punk and mayhem. I think they broke up at just the right time. They got in and got out at the height of their game. Leave a mark and be done with it.

AMDI PETERSEN'S ARMÉ - "Blod Ser Mere Virkelict Ud Da Film" EP

There is no doubt in my mind that these boys from Denmark have got their shit nailed. They take their influences from the early DC/Dischord scene and thrown in some BLACK FLAG and drive a musical nail perfectly through your head. The music is really intense and in your face with strong growling vocals that really compliment the songs well. I got to see them a couple of times on their US tour, and they totally blew everybody away with a feverish presence on stage. I recommend that you pick up everything this band does, you will not be let down!

V/A - "Histeria" LP

Just take a look at this line-up: LIFE'S HALT, SEEIN RED, LIMPWRIST, E-150 ESPERANZA, DS-13, DEATHREAT, SIN ORDEN and MELEE. Basically the cream of the crop in worldwide punk, hardcore and thrash. There is not a dud to be found on here and any chance to hear another LIFE'S HALT song is a good one in my book. And how about those folks in SEEIN RED? Where the fuck do they get their energy? The next time you are feeling old and lazy, just throw one of their records on for some true inspiration. And as if this package wasn't great enough, there are large fold out poster/inserts of the all bands on the compilation. You like your music fast and furious? How about smart lyrics and bands with a social/political awareness? Then do yourself a favor...consume and destroy!

GAYRILLA BISCUITS - "The Demos" EP

The very first time I heard this record over at *MRR* I had one of those record collecting moments when your chest gets all tense and your brain starts running 100 M.P.H. trying to figure out how to track the record down. Well after jumping through a few hoops I tracked a copy down and have laughed hard listening to each and every time. GAYRILLA BISCUITS takes many of the straightedge classics like *No Spiritual Surrender* by INSIDE OUT and *Nailed To The X* by BOLD and changes them into tongue in cheek pro-gay anthems like to *No Homosexual Surrender* and *Nailed In The Ass.* The lyrics are brilliant and the music is pretty much dead on (though the recording is a bit muffled). This is a parody record ranking up there the GRUDGE and CRUCIAL YOUTH records of years gone past. I have asked a million people who is in this band and nobody seems to know. So in the words of PANSY DIVISION, "For Those About To Suck Cock...We Salute You."

JAWBREAKER - "Etc." CD

Damn, I guess I am going to let you all in on a little secret. Though most of the music I listen to has the power to blow eardrums and maim small children in a single listen, I have a soft spot in my heart for the band known as JAWBREAKER. It is no joke that they are one of my favorite bands *ever.* I have been a huge fan ever since the *Whack & Blight* and *Busy* EPs came out. I got to see them live a bunch of times and I still occasionally find myself wishing I could see them again. So when this CD came out consisting of compilation tracks, B-sides and five unreleased outtakes I was elated. This is upbeat and catchy punk rock that perks the ears and moves the feet. And Blake's gruff vocals were a trademark of the band that cannot be dismissed. Some say these guys were one of the originators of "emo" music. I say nonsense to that. They were simply a great punk rock band.

TEAR IT UP - "Nothing To Nothing" LP

Leave it to the guys in TEAR IT UP to put out another record that is so good they have made it into my year end top 10 two years in a row! By now everybody knows about TEAR IT UP'S non-stop attack of punk, hardcore and thrash that gets smashed together creating an all out assault on your eager eardrums. With song titles like *Relationshit, Furious and Alone, I Don't Need To Be Saved, You Make Me Hate You* and *Close My Eyes And Hope For The Worst* you would think that this band would just self destruct with rage and self hatred. Instead they come blasting out of the gates, touring non-stop, putting out release after release and being some of the nicest most sincere guys around. Support this band any way you can!

CARL CORDOVA

Hardcore and punk bands aren't doing anything musically different in 2002 than in past years. The most important thing (to me anyway) has always been the message, a message of personal growth and societal awareness. We need a message now more than ever, and it shouldn't be masked by bad poetry and wanking guitar riffs. This is DIY, not LED ZEPPLIN. If there's no message, then you might as well listen to songs that are actually written by good musicians, and not pretentious fashion kids striving to be "the next big thing". Keep your head up and your eyes open. Here are the bands that stayed true in 2002:

THE FIRST STEP - "Open Hearts and Clear Minds" EP

Since Livewire Records *still* hasn't sent copies in to MRR for review, I am going to give this record a complete run-through. This is my favorite straight edge hardcore record of the year. Hell, this might be my favorite record of the year. The vocals are so energetic that I can actually picture the singer doing jumps off the walls in the recording studio. The lyrics are on the positive hardcore tip, with one song about vegetarianism. With superior drumming and song writing, I haven't heard a band do this style better since YOUTH OF TODAY.

KNOCKDOWN - "Get Away" EP

If AGNOSTIC FRONT were straight edge when they recorded the United Blood EP, and then broke edge before releasing it, it would sound something like this.

UNIT PRIDE - "Then And Now" CD

Bay Area Straight Edge Hardcore starts right here. "Wide awake and goddamn proud!"

TEAR IT UP - "Nothing to Nothing" LP

Anyone from a spiky-haired crusty punk to a Posi-topped straight edge kid feels welcome at a TEAR IT UP show. It's illustrated in their music and their attitude, and that's why I like them. Incorporating many different styles on this LP makes for a modern hardcore masterpiece.

DESPERATE MEASURES - "It's On Your Hands" EP

Total SIDE BY SIDE worship.

STRIKING DISTANCE - "The Fuse Is Lit" EP

After their first EP and LP, I didn't think this band could get any more pissed. Thankfully I was wrong.

MENTAL - "Demo #2" Tape Demo

Two words: Rap Intro.

CALVARY - "Outnumbered is Outflanked" LP

Total RITES OF SPRING worship.

TRAGEDY - "Can We Call This Life?" EP

I became a fan after I heard this EP and then saw them live. If the new LP sounds anything like "The Ending Fight", it's going to be one of the best records of 2003.

INFEST - "No Man's Slave" LP

I would like to hope that this was put out just as a reminder to every band who has been trying to imitate INFEST for the last 10 years.

Honorable Mentions: **HOLDING ON "Question What You Live For" LP** (I've only heard two tracks, but this would of definitely made the list had I heard it in its entirety). **CUT THE SHIT "Bored to Death" EP (Too new to tell, but my turntable can't get enough). SUICIDE FILE "The Purple Dawn" EP** (Awesome lyrics combined with rocking guitars). **LIMP WRIST LP** (With all the homophobia in the hardcore scene today, this record couldn't have come out at a better time. LIMP WRIST is also the reason the Hysteria comp is m-a-n-d-a-t-o-r-y listening).

SPENCER RANGITSCH

CALVARY - "Outnumbered is Outflanked" LP

I can't say enough good things about this record. From the moment I heard the CDR I was convinced that it would be my favorite record to come around in at least the past three years. I was right. While CALVARY make it clear who their influences are (ONE LAST WISH, EMBRACE, GANG OF FOUR, MAGAZINE, to name a few) they combine these influences in a way that makes for an entirely original and refreshing sound (to say the very least). I really could go on and on about this record and just how good it really is (the lyrics, the production, the brilliant songs themselves), but I will spare you and just say that it is by *far* the best record of the year. Get it.

INFEST - "No Man's Slave" LP

When Max Ward picked up this record I was hearing about it constantly from him for weeks. I picked it up to see what all the fuss was about and was floored. The riffs, the vocals, the song-structures, the production...Completely crushing.

HOT SNAKES - "Suicide Invoice" LP

Being a big fan of DRIVE LIKE JEHU, PITCHFORK, and the first HOT SNAKES album, *Automatic Midnight,* I was at the record store Tuesday morning on the release date to pick up this gem. Arguably, this album is just as good, if not better than the first, further noting the effectiveness of Rick Fork and John Reis' collaborative strength. And with completely memorable tracks like "LAX", "Suicide Invoice", and "Who Died" - How could you argue otherwise?

JAWBREAKER - "Etc." 2xLP

Who isn't familiar with this record by now? A collection of b-sides, comp tracks and the like from one of the most seminal bands of the nineties. While the four previously unheard tracks are a definite highlight, the best thing about this album is its successful chronicling of JAWBREAKER's sound and how it changed over the years. An absolutely essential collection.

THE PUPILS - LP

Yes, I love LUNGFISH. Although I thought the last couple LUNGFISH albums were a pretty big letdown, I was pleasantly surprised with this duo comprised of Dan Higgs and Asa Osborne of LUNGFISH. The songs are completely stripped down and often just a simple riff with Dan's trademark vocals riding over it all. Simple, yet *very* effective.

To save space, my other five records:

YAPHET KOTTO - "Usual Suspects" EP
THIS IS MY FIST - EP
SCHOLASTIC DETH - "Killed By School" EP
FOURTH ROTOR - "Seize" CD
V/A - "20 Years of Dischord" 3xCD

TIM BROOKS

Yet another great year for punk rock, its inspiring to know as I rocket towards my twilight years that I can still find great new records to blow my mind. Choosing just 10 is so hard and my list changes week to week, but for now here are 10 big hitters in no particular order:

THE TONE - "Here's Another Reason" LP The bastard sons of Arfur Daley, these cheeky cockneys outdid themselves with the lost NEWTOWN NEUROTICS/RUTS/CLASH LP – every track a winner, fun lyrics, catchy tunes. Proof that a bunch of old south London farts can put out an LP every bit as good as your old favorites.

GC5 - s/t CD This band is the best straight up punk band in the USA. Period. Unfortunately due to the fact that they don't jump on the fashion train they are largely ignored by all the spiky fashion punks and labels. Saw these folks blow away about 20 people on a Wednesday night here in SF. Energetic, well played DROPKICKS meets SLF via the POGUES with a smattering of lefty politics. I can't believe these guys aren't huge. All their stuff is great but their new recording is by far their best. Punk Rock.

TRAGEDY - "Can We Call This Life" EP

Every decade a band comes along and really shakes things up in the punk and hardcore scene leaving a mark that will always remain. I think TRAGEDY is one of those bands that 10 or 15 years from now people will still be talking about. They have taken elements of Japanese hardcore, Scandinavian hardcore and even some UK peace punk and created this epic sweeping wall of noise. What makes this band so special is that while they are hardcore as fuck they have tunes and melodies. This EP slows things down from the LP of last year and it gets the hairs on the back of my neck standing up it's so good.... Remember when you bought "The Serenade Is Dead" by CONFLICT and nearly cried??? Same thing with this disc. I saw them play the title tune in a tiny packed space and it was so loud and epic it buckled my knees. The new LP is much the same and has already made my top 10 for next year.

YOUNG WASTENERS - "We Got Ways" 12"

Everyone was bleating about AMDI PETERSENS ARMI this year, who are undeniably great, but this (and the HUL LP) is the real Danish gem. Featuring three of APA this is total LA '79 worship. It sounds like the RANDOMS or the DEADBEATS with Jello singing...they even have a sax and pull it off. The whole packaging is so late 70's early 80's too.

SPITS - "Spit Me Out" LP

I can't believe I missed these guys dressed up as robots and rabbits shooting fireworks at the crowd. This is retarded punk genius. Imagine if DEVO were fighting the RAMONES in fancy dress. All the songs sound like they are straight off a Killed By Death comp, and every one would be your favorite.

LIMPWRIST - LP

Like TRAGEDY these folks are going to make a mark in punk history – confronting the macho world of hardcore with their tongue in cheek (or should that be cocks in cheek) lyrics and absolutely blazing hardcore. Its nice to see some 25 years on people are still able to do something refreshingly new and exciting, all the while attacking the prejudices that have crept into the punk scene.

THE STAND BY ME - "In My Car" 7" Bit of a wild card this one, no idea who the fuck these guys are but it blew me away. I'm a big fan of the mod sound, but oftimes it just doesn't have enough balls. This is the 7" for you if you wished your JAM and CHORDS records were a bit more punk. Has that Japanese charm and mangled English to boot.

SCHOLASTIC DETH -"Killed By School" EP I liked this band's other 2 7"s, but this is the cherry on the cake. Raw as fuck, wailing feedback between the songs and sounding like HERESY gone youth crew. There is no let up throughout, but what makes this special is how this band just doesn't take itself or the punk scene seriously, its about time the hardcore scene had someone poke fun at it from the inside. This band is sadly gone...but not forgotten.

BASEBALL FURIES - "Greater Than Ever" LP: Everyone is talking about how the Pacific Northwest has all the best garage bands. Whilst I'll admit it would be a close call in a street fight between these and the SPITS, I almost think these Midwesterners are ugly enough to win. This LP is a garage classic, the DEAD BOYS through a mangle, and songs, which you can sing-a-long to. I still wouldn't bring them home to meet my mum.

BOXED IN - "World Stops Turning" 7" Had to include another disc from the motherland – bunch of old-timers throw down an absolute crushing 7" showing all the kids new to it how it should be done. RIPCORD meets ANTI CIMEX with dark depressing lyrics. A hardcore battering that floors me everytime....the future of UK hardcore.

There are tons of other worthy contenders which would have made it any other day...here are some of the nearly but not quites: **Rambo – LP, Dillinger 4 – LP, No Parade – LP, Mr Airplane Man – LP, Stakeout – EP, Tear It Up – Nothing to Nothing LP, Beltones – Shitty In Pink LP, Calvary – LP, Barse – EP, JBA – LP, Epoxies – LP, Acursed – LP, Henry Fiats Open Sore – 10", Disclose – 12"**...and the list goes on.

MAX TREMBLAY

AGAINST ME! - "Reinventing Axl Rose" LP

Okay, this is a fucking no-brainer. I could do a song-by-song dissection of this record and tell you why I love every second of it, but instead I'll just say that never before has a band captured so completely what it's like to be alive. They write about love and politics, but they don't limit themselves to either subjects like most bands tend to do, and they sing with such urgency and sincerity that I get shivers every time I hear the songs. That says a lot considering I've been playing this record nearly every day since it wound up in my bin in May. Often times, the entire band and their extended group of friends sing along, and you can feel an atmosphere of community that you don't get on other records. While the simple, melodic punk arrangements certainly aren't revolutionary, they compliment the lyrics perfectly. Bittersweet and beautiful, everyone will find something to love about this album.

DILLINGER FOUR - "Situationist Comedy" LP

So much ink has been spilled singing the praises of this band that I know I can't say anything new or enlightening about them, but to leave them off of this list would be absolutely criminal. They're smarter than you, they're funnier than you, they rock at least fifty to a hundred times harder than you, and they could drink you and your mother under the table. Don't fuck with them; the D4 army got they back, in full effect.

DISCOUNT - "Singles #1 & #2" CD

I understand that these were released separately, but I can't pick one over the other, and they really are companion pieces. I got into DISCOUNT after they had already called it quits, and these collections gave me the opportunity to trace their growth from simple, quirky melodic punk band to pop revolutionaries with a clear vision. If you're like me and are grossly uneducated in the history of this band, you pretty much need to obtain these by any means necessary (just donët steal ëem from me). While there are a few clunkers and filler songs here and there, the breadth of these discs is truly astonishing, and there's enough good stuff to sink your grimy teeth into.

FUTURES - "Electric Wave from the Underworld" LP

The FUTURES have come to save us from boring, generic hardcore, and you better be fucking ready. You know how people at hardcore shows say they're dancing when they're really just running into each other? Finally, we have a hardcore band that you can actually dance to. The FUTURES play thrash with enough musical variety and genius to include straight up rock ën' roll and some disco breakdowns, and they are the fucking bomb shit live. Point your finger and shake your ass.

INSURGENT/SOMETIMES WALKING, SOMETIMES RUNNING - split EP

To be perfectly honest, I think the SOMETIMES WALKING SOMETIMES RUNNING side never really reaches past middle-of-the-road screamy hardcore. It's all right, but it never grabbed me. However, the INSURGENT slap us with a fucking epic of a song that really encompasses everything that makes them great: youthful optimism, passionate vocals, and driving melodic punk. Plus, the arrangements show a great deal more maturity than the 10î, making this side near perfect. Basically, this listing is only for one song, but I'll be damned if it isn't one of the best songs in ages.

TRIAL BY FIRE - "Ringing in the Dawn" LP

These four D.C. dudes churn out ferociously catchy punk in the vein of STRIKE ANYWHERE and KID DYNAMITE, while never actually sounding derivative. In a little less than a half-hour, TRIAL BY FIRE exhibit more passion and desire than most bands do in their lifetimes. You'll scream in anger, and smile out of sheer joy. An extra ìcheersî to Salad Days studios for consistently delivering the best quality punk rock recordings you will ever hear. Such crisp guitar tone! Yum!

QUEST FOR QUINTANA ROO - "Things to Remember" EP

What happens when you put the three best teenage musicians in the Bay Area into the same room? You get the most brutal, beautiful screamed-hoarse hardcore you could ever hope for. It's truly a pity that these guys broke up. If they had kept going, they could have owned the world, especially with the new, more melodic direction they took on this, their final release.

THIS BIKE IS A PIPE BOMB - "Front Seat Solidarity" LP

Tired of country punk played by major label hipsters with perfect hair? If so, you really need to listen to this. Punk-as-fuck country and folk music are what you're going to get on this record, played with the sincerity you expect from the best punk bands. Plan-It-X really knows how to do a quality D.I.Y. release, from the hand-screened covers to the photocopied inserts, and it's bands like these that keep punk from slipping into the clutches of Epitaph-dom. Support them.

TRAGEDY - "Can We Call This Life?" EP

If you haven't seen or heard TRAGEDY by now, you're a fucking asshole. More melodic and refined sounding than the LP (They even push the music into AFI territory at times. They pull it off, though. Trust me.), but no less powerful or punishing, this EP is truly massive, and has the best artwork of any record to come out this year. Plus, these guys make the funniest, most offensive shirts ever, perfect for pissing people off at your school/place of employment. Believe the hype.

NEW GRANADA - "Fighting the Demons" EP

This rocks so fucking hard. Apparently, these guys have broken up, but they left us with two brilliant EPs. The music is based in thrashing hardcore, but they branch out into straight up rock on most of the songs, and the lyrics are more introspective than other hardcore bands, but not in an AMERICAN NIGHTMARE, "you broke up with me, I want to kill you" kind of way. The moment the singer screams "can't help myself if I tried" and the first song kicks into high gear, you're hooked.

BOBBY MANIC

MUMMIES - "Never Been Caught" CD

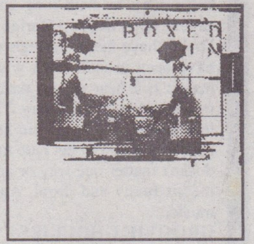
The Budget Rock Kings have reissued their debut LP on CD. The band who's battle cry once was "Fuck CD's!" has farted on the world by re-releasing *Never Been Caught* with bonus tracks taken from singles and comps on one compact disc. All I have to say is; "hahahahahahah!". Why the fuck not, eh? The band who used to steal anything they didn't break from clubs, cashing in on something that they helped create (for better or worse) and something that is just a fluke of the record industry (yes I am talking about this "garage revival"). The MUMMIES never gave a shit about street cred or punk points! They were douche bags in band-aides! This is a slap in the face to all their "fans" and I love it! Now if that isn't punk-fucking-rock I'll cash in my chips at the door. Anyone who thinks this is the MUMMIES "selling out" should be punched in the man sack repeatedly until they cough up blood and a squishy gob of testicle.

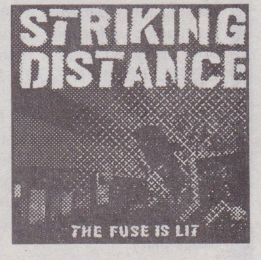
EPOXIES - "Need More Time" CDEP

Collecting both of their mind blowing 7"s on Dirtnap, this will make you break out the neon make up, duct tape, sleeveless stripped shirts, and the rest of your new wave wardrobe. You can't help but love this band. Plastic Music. That is the best way to describe this. You can't dismiss it as "retro 80's bubble gum" or "New Wave". Sure the influences are the same; ADAM AND THE ANTS, DEVO, OINGO BOINGO, REZILLOS and maybe even JOSIE COTTON (sure, why the hell not), but everything from the lyrics to the delivery set them above the rest. Roxy Epoxie is like a demented cheerleader with a low, sultry voice that ranges from yodels to screams, to swooning with the best of them. She can wrap her tongue around a lyric and spit it back with such venom and intensity that it would make everyone from Jello to Exene weep. Five songs (including an ADAM AND THE ANTS and ALICE COOPER cover), all winners. This band is essential listening. Anyone not singing "oh-we-oh-we-uh-uh-oh!" is a loser and will be buying these records next summer for inflated prices on E-Bay.

PHENOMENAUTS - "Rockets And Robots" CD

Earth's very own PHENOMENAUTS have come to save the day (and while they're at it, our local rock scene) and show us how to Rocket Roll. They are singing space rangers, armed with a stand up bass, some semi-hallow body guitars and a malfunctioning Joebot Unit (he can play his guitar and sing his songs well enough, but from personal experience his Compulsive Chip needs to be worked on, not to mention his attraction to other household appliances (the toaster will never be the same)). Rocket Roll. It sounds a little like rockabilly and pop punk fused together in a perfect combination, but it's got something extra; it's space rock. Oh, yes. It's





the new emo. Soon everyone will be trading their sweaters, glasses and ugly foot wear in for a blue Dickies jacket, black Chucks, white t-shirts, black Dickies work pants and Cadets' Badges. Join up now. They're looking for a few good men... and women... and maybe another dog or two. These guys are the real deal. They never break character (my drummer lives with Commander Angel Nova, Cadet Greg and Corporal Joebot, he can vouch for this). They are like the GO-NUTS... but from space.

ROCK'N'ROLL ADVENTURE KIDS - "Live On Berserkley Radio" 12"

Cock-a-doodle- doo!!!! The Adventure Kids live on KALX... chicken cluckin' insanity! HASIL ADKINS, the DRAGS, JOHNATHAN RICHMAN, FRED SCHINDER and DEVO's love child. Sloppy, knee-slappin' hillbilly music to train hop to or get down and boogie to. Oscar has a boner.

RIFF RANDELLS - "Lethal Lip Gloss" 10"

These girls (and guy) hail from Canada and serve up poppy bubble gum punk rock. Strong hints of the BOB-BYTEENS, HOLLY AND THE ITALIANS, JOSIE COT-TON, the GO-GO'S, RUNAWAYS etc... If the DONNAS still had Darian writing their songs they would sound like this. This is great. You know it, I know it. The rest of the world is in on it, but here's my problem. This is produced by Dave Alcock, the drummer of CHIXDIGGIT, and the CD is on Delmanco, KJ from CHIXDIGGIT's label, and KJ is rumored to be dating Kathy (the singer/ guitarist and really foxy chick)... how can I put this nicely? I think KJ helps out a lot with song writing. There I said it. i'm not saying KJ is doing a Darian or anything, the RIFF RAN-DALS have been through several line up changes and have been around for a while now... but the fact of the matter is I hear strong resemblances to CHIXDIGGIT's writing style and delivery. The song structure, rhyme pattern and an off beat lyric here and there scream KJ. i'm probably going to get hate mail for even proposing this. It doesn't matter one way or another. This is great. It makes me sit funny and drool. And i'm only talking about the music.

GROOVIE GHOULIES - "Go! Stories"

New drummer, new label, new album, same great bag of tricks.

EXPLODING HEARTS - "Guitar Romantic" LP

Makes you wanna go out and buy white levis and gobs of eye liner.

FM KNIVES - "Useless and Modern" CD

Oh, my word. This band is all the rage these days (well around these parts). Missing a FM Knives show results in Mitch Cardwell threatening to destroy you. Their debut CD will make you go out of your head. It's got hooks in all the right places, vocals that you'd swear were from across the Atlantic, in fact the whole package oozes UK power pop/ new wave/ punk pop ala the BUZZCOCKS (listen to the best Pete Shelly imitation since the BUZ-ZCOCKS got back together!), the BOYS, VAPORS and maybe even the POINTED STICKS (though the Pointed Ones were from Canada not the UK). Pissed off the BRIEFS "sold out"? Then this is your new favorite band.

EXPLODING HEARTS - "Making Teenage Faces" 7"

Power pop, heavy on the power. Oh man, oh man! It was hard to stop playing the a-side. I spent a week just listening to the title track over and over again before I flipped the record. "Making Teenage Faces" is one of those songs that you will be stuck in your head for a month. Songs like this are what we call "classics".

MALLRATS - "Fall In Love All Over Again With..." LP

Hands down my favorite record of the year. I can't stop playing this. The MALLRATS are a three piece power pop combo with strong influences from 60's beat and late 70's/ early 80's radio friendly punk acts like ELVIS COSTELLO, the GO-GO's, JAM, etc... These guys deliver the goods. Tight, catchy, up beat tunes that will have you twisting, shouting and falling in love. I don't know what it is about this band that spells g-e-n-i-u-s, maybe it's the clever and crafty song writing, maybe the more than above average musicianship, maybe the suits, maybe the fact that Ted sings like a girl. What ever it is, it's down right brilliant. I put this record on and it's a bed room dance party.

ROBERT COLLINS (WILLIE NELSON)

ACURSED - "Livet Ar Den Langsta Till Helvete" LP
SKIT SYSTEM - "Enkel Resa Till Rannstenen" LP
TOTALITAR/DROP DEAD - split EP

Three releases from Swedish bands sit atop my year end "Best Of" list, and I can't think of a better place for them! Swedish hardcore is pretty much unbeatable in my book; frantic D-Beats, blown out guitars and pissed at everything vocals all come together to put a smile on this punker's face. ACURSED took the whole genre several steps further with their LP. After a couple of splits and a short nine song CD that came as close to perfection as I could ever hope, "Livet Ar Den..." blew my extremely high expectations out of the fucking water. Combining all the elements that make Swedish HC brilliant with slower parts that pummel the listener into submission and a few acoustic breaks that make me grit my teeth, cause I know all too well the kind of destruction that is sure to follow. SKIT SYSTEM are certainly the modern masters, and their most recent LP disappointed no one. What can you say? Every song is punishing, the lyrics are spewed like razor blades, and it's just so damned fast...the record is gone in a flash, there's hardly time to breath! TOTALI-TAR have been teaching bands how this style should be played for practically as long as "Swedish Hardcore" has existed, and came out with three new records this year. Their two EP's are brilliant, but I am partial to their tracks on the DROP DEAD split...and the return of DROP DEAD after a few quiet years makes this record an easy pick. DROP DEAD (from Rhode Island, which is, admittedly, one hell of a long drive from Sweden) deliver six new tunes that are as scathing as anything they've ever released...and the split came on pink vinyl, making it extra tough!

IRON LUNG/LANA DAGALES split LP
IRON LUNG - "Demonstrations in Pressure and Volume" EP

Almost every time I see a band trying to be quirky and playing without a guitarist or without a bassist, my only response is, "they sure would be better if they had a guitarist or a bassist." But these two west coast bands prove me wrong time and time again. The much delayed IRON LUNG split LP with LANA DAGALES finally made it out, and I was picking pieces of my jaw off of the floor for days. LANA DAGALES is as close to insanity as you can get on vinyl...as soon as their side is over, you need to listen to it again so you can try to figure out what just happened. Half an LP's worth of grind lessons for all who are smart enough to take notice. this bass/drum duo is just simply punishing. Guitar/drum duo IRON LUNG fill their side of the LP with truly unique music; grinding at times but never grindcore, usually noisy but never noise, totally crushing but...well, totally crushing. IRON LUNG write songs that violate all the punk rock taboos (fuck, sometimes they don't even have any riffs in their songs) and it works so perfectly. So they ain't got a bass player...they don't *need* a bass player. Out of all the records on my list, I don't think I can name one more powerful than this split LP. IRON LUNG's "Demonstrations..." EP on 625 is slightly more straightforward, but just serves as more evidence of this band's brilliance (can you tell I like 'em?).

KYLESA - self titled LP
PG 99/MAJORITY RULE split LP

While it is certainly worth noting that this band contains members of DAMAD, KYLESA do not need the credentials, as they stand powerfully tall on their own. Haunting rhythms, sweeping guitars, doom and gloom vocals, it's all here, and it leaves you breathless. Nine songs, each of them more pummeling than the last; the apocalypse never sounded so bleak, and armageddon never sounded this good. Sadly, bassist Brian Duke died before the album's completion, adding an even darker aura to this record, but KYLESA continues to write and record with their new bassist, Corey, and their records keep getting better.

A day's drive north from KYLESA are Virginians MAJORITY RULE and PG 99. Often associated with one another (they are from the same town, and often tour together), these two bands play similar styles of chaotic hardcore. The eight members of PG 99 are a spectacle live, and don't always translate as well recorded, but these tunes are some of their best...haunting and destructive, always on the edge of collapse, their intensity live is captured superbly on these five tracks. MAJORITY RULE have only three members, but manage to create a wall of noise that equals if not surpasses PG 99. Some of the best song writers playing punk rock these days, MAJORITY RULE expertly utilize the studio to make records that are truly awesome. Their three songs on this split are perhaps even better than their "Conversations With David Frost" LP, which is no small feat, and I find myself pulling out this record more and more often.

BG - "The Congratulations" EP, "The and That's What I'm Here To Do" EP
THE AWAKENING - "Burning Wind" EP, "The Final Feast" EP

Ohio's AWAKENING play hardcore influenced as much by MOTORHEAD as by DISCHARGE, and these two EP's unfortunately make up almost all of their recorded output (an LP to follow in 2003). Heavy like you can hardly imagine, AWAKENING write great songs, something sorely lacking in hardcore bands these days (and those days too, I guess). Not unlike BORN DEAD ICONS (whose LP is excellent, by the way), a steady driving force propels these songs and it feels like you are getting kicked in the face methodically, over and over. I await the LP with great anticipation. Arkansas natives BG also delivered two flawless records this year. The main thing that sets BG ahead of the pack is their playing...these dudes could be tech metal gods, *if they wanted to be*. But instead they give us brutally fast crushing hardcore executed with alarming precision. Never predictable, BG is one of the few bands that can give IRON LUNG a run for their money in the originality department, and they never stop crushing.

INFECT - "Estrepito" EP
BEHIND ENEMY LINES - "Know Your Enemy" LP
SCHOLASTIC DETH - "Killed By School" EP
BURY THE LIVING - "Banned For Life" EP

Brasil's INFECT released what is without a doubt the my favorite hardcore EP of 2002 with "Estrepito." Five South American women playing straight edge hardcore that leaves all their first world male counterparts wondering "we got all the right moves, our hair looks great, we're all wearing YOUTH OF TODAY shirts...so why aren't our records this good?" Well kids, it's cause these women have got fukken HEART! These songs blister and burn, and the lyrics are scathing criticisms of "first world" treatment (read: abuse) of Latin America. I have truly never heard a sXe record this awesome.

The first record from BEHIND ENEMY LINES is a steamroller of a record, combining the vocal venom and drums from AUS ROTTEN with the guitar and song writing of Bill the living legend (of REACT, PIST, MANKIND? and a long list of other crucial east coast crust core bands). Every song is a steamroller, and the deafening wall of guitars leaps of the record and demands your attention.

"Killed By School" is the final record from the Bay Area's SCHOLASTIC DETH, and it blows their previous records out of the classroom. The noise and feedback would make CONFUSE proud, and the music manages to infectiously addictive while still ripping your face off. The drums on this EP are mind blowing, and the songs are crafted expertly...this is the rare record that you want to play over and over, forsaking the new overpriced bootleg you bought at the show the night before. The last few years have seen dozens of "old school" hardcore bands, which is both good and bad. Lumping Tennessee's BURY THE LIVING into that pile would be a horrible disservice, as their "Banned For Life" EP is simply a juggernaut. Compare them to NEGATIVE APPROACH or the NECROS if you want (although they are easily as good, if not better--*gasp*--than either of those bands...but then NECROS are pretty fucking good, huh? Anyway, they shred, honest), but BURY THE LIVING are just a stripped down raw as fuck hardcore punk band, with a bullshit-o-meter set on zero. When I heard this EP, I actually got up out of my seat and shouted "Fuck Yeah!!" They had a split release that was just as good, I only hope this band will grace hardcore with a full 12 incher.

There are of course plenty of other noteworthy releases. VAE VICTUS' "Ugly Reflection" LP was epic, as was the SICARII self titled 12". SATURATION's full length is the record that DROP DEAD should have put out two years ago, and is as good as most anything I listed above, while Brazil's BRIGADA DO ODIO reformed (I think?) to release an EP that redefines grindcore...at least I hope that it does, as it is better than 99% of the grind records that come through our mail slot. Ever heard of BLACK-WALL HITCH? I didn't think so, and there ain't no god-damned justice in the world, cause the "Milwaukee Burning" EP from these Wisconsin unknowns is head and shoulders above scores of mediocre hardcore records released by "cool" bands, and snatched up by fans wanting to get their hands on the latest thing. Spain's E-150 and ZANUSSI teamed up for a blistering split EP, and Japan's DUDMAN have handily destroyed all SPAZZ and CHARLES BRONSON knock offs (and perhaps the originals as well) with their "Fu Hatsu Damn Otoko" EP. I intentionally did not mention the TONS of reissues and bootlegs, there are just too many great bands that are playing NOW, it seems a shame to put so much energy into bands that broke up years ago and whose members could give a fuck about punk. But the BCT reissues are excellent, and great records came out last year by ANTIS-CHISM, CITIZEN'S ARREST, GAUZE, OFFENDERS, DEATH SIDE and scores of others, some legitimate, and some just people gouging the consumers for a few bucks.

But two of my favorite records from last year were a far cry from the hardcore mayhem I've been raving about. The latest full length from Boston's FAT DAY, entitled "FAT DAY IV," is all the proof you need that FAT DAY are, without a doubt, the most original punk band of the last decade (or two). If Harvard graduates playing songs sent in on postcards by their fans is a little much for your average spikes and studs punkers, then check out the ripping insanity of their "Poop" EP, and you will surely then agree that FAT DAY are the triumphant saviours of punk rock. And if you don't agree with me, then you either got no imagination, or worse; you got no sense of humor.

BRUCE ROEHRS

The Australians came to conquer with the **RUPTURE/ANTiSEEN split**. On this Snapshot Records seven inch, ANTiSEEN come for your brain with "Suicide Boogie," from 1988. This song starts out slow and menacing like so many great ANTiSEEN songs and towards the end cranks up the speed and the volume. Turn over this scum punk 45 and RUPTURE treat you to "I'm the Man," which is a melodic rock n' roll number about unbridled lust and instant sexual gratification. On this song the boys from RUPTURE even include piano playing. Pretty damn rocking'! For this record and Blurters product write to Jay at Snapshot Records, PO Box 175, Georges Hall, NSW 2198, Australia; or jay_snapshot@hotmail.com.

The **BLURTERS**, have a fucking excellent **split CD** out with **DEMOLITION HIGH STYLE!** The BLURTERS start the battle with "Motherfuckin' Sexist Motherfucker". A brutal treatise on male/female relations. Then the BLURTERS smash you in the face with "Beer and Bile". Fucking great! The third song on the Bottle Scars and Blazing Guitars CD is "Turn Off the Radio,", about the deplorable condition of commercial radio. The fourth and final BLURTERS song is, "Bite It You Scum," by GG Allin, which they also dedicate to RUPTURE's Gus Chamber. Excellent! The second half of this CD is performed by DEMOLITION HIGH STYLE, which is the new band featuring Scott Mac from TOE TO TOE on vocals and song writing chores. This is good street rock with shouted vocals, searing guitar parts, and a strong bottom end. DEMOLITION HIGH STYLE wallop you with three originals: "Ill Gotten Gain," "Anti-Hero," and "Sin and Redemption," before their grand finale, "Chip On Your Shoulder" by COCK SPARRER. This is the first release on Scott MacFadyen's Sold Our Souls record label. Write to Scott at PO Box 751 Newtown NSW 2042, Australia.

Jay from the BLURTERS and Snapshot Records has a great compilation for you bums! It's a CD called **"We're the Blood 2"**. On this fucker THE BLURTERS lead the charge with "Sleepin' on the Shithouse". Fuck yes! Song two by the BLURTERS is "Trinity Grammer," which rocks like a motherfucker!! Next you have a punk song with a message; "Fuck Off," which is balls out punk rock for you cretins! Song four is "Cheerios," and this shit is blistering hot! The BLURTERS finish off their portion of this loud and proud punk CD with a first-rate rocker, "Can't Get Away". The BLURTERS are one fucking hard-ass punk rock band! The BLURTERS don't get the respect they deserve - this CD might start to change that! Next up on this compilation is CHANGEOVER. These West Gosford, New South Wales, Australian punks also rock like crazy! CHANGEOVER rip through "Drinking in the Park," "Fuck the Discos," "Fear of Culture," "Rebels Without a Clue," and "Aussie Punx". This is great fast, rowdy punk rock! The next band featured on the We're the Blood 2 Cd compilation is CHARTER 77 from Melbourne, Australia. These punks start with "Get Fucked," lead into "Melbourne Punx," and then land right on their political number, "Slobodan". Next up we have great music for you punks! The song is "Pornos," a fast rocket - fueled killer track! Then you get a great cover of the BUSINESS' "Drinking and Driving". All right! Band number four on this fine compilation is RIOT 99, from Toronto, Ontario, Canada punking out with "Fuck America," "Decade on the Dole," "Destroy the City" (the title cut on RIOT 99's debut EP from last year), "Start a Riot," and "Guttersnipe". The final band on this compilation is SISTER MARY ROTTEN CROTCH, from Kansas City, Missouri. The hard-nosed female vocals give SISTER MARY ROTTEN CROTCH the push over the top! The women run through "Dies Irae," "Turning on Me," "Instigator," "Ain't Fucking You," "Fuct" and "Little Slut". Don't mess with these women (or Brent the drummer)! You will get your skinny ass booted into next week!

Jay and Snapshot Records have another compilation for you. This one is called "**Beer and Bile–Worldwide Streetpunk Compilation** "and it showcases thirty-one tracks, some of the best of which are supplied by Australia's STANLEY KNIFE, THE BLURTERS, DOC EVIL and AVO. This CD represents so many hooligans! Read this list of culprits - outstanding in their depth and their depravity: THE GENERATORS doing "Dead at 16"; STANLEY KNIFE doing "Streetpunk"; BOMBSHELL ROCKS doing "Wayward"; THE BUSINESS doing "Ghetto Youth," THUG MURDER doing "Power"; THE BLURTERS doing "Sleepin' on the Shithouse" and "Beer 'n Bile"; DOGSHIT SANDWICH doing "Wanna Be"; NOT AN OPTION doing "Hollywood Marriage" and "Streetpunk RocknRoll"; THE ACCIDENTS doing "Dirty Fucker" and "Election Scam" (both songs are very good!); BEDLAM BEGGARS doing "Ain't Nowhere to Go" and "Livin it Up"; VOICE OF A GENERATION doing "Police Story"; BULLDOG SPIRIT doing "Fake" and "Show No Remorse"; BLISTERHEAD doing "Radio Riot" and "Cellblock Rock"; DOC EVIL doing their absolutely fucking brutal "Touched by an Angel" and "unemployment" - great stuff! VERY METAL doing "Soldier" and "Hit and Run"; and "Now or Never," (a cover song originally done by THE FREEZE); ADOLF AND THE PISS ARTISTS, one of the premier streetpunk bands in the United States, doing "This is Your Law" and "No Cross to Bear" - fucking excellent!!!!! THE BONES doing "Pumpin' Gas" and FLATLINERS doing "Military City USA" and "Numero Oucho".

HAMMERLOCK, Reigning West Coast Confederacy of Scum Kings have some new country punk treats for you!! Liz and Travis Kenney front this roots American music outfit, and they are great! If HAMMERLOCK comes anywhere near your town you must go see them play!

HAMMERLOCK had a really good CD called, Anthems for Outlaws way back in 1999, on Man's Ruin Records. Listen to "Sweet Senorita," "Hate Radio," "Black Foot Stomp," "California," "Lake County," "Militia Time," a cover of George Jones' "Who Shot Sam," "Mississippi Kid," "Mexican Sun," "Whiskey Rebel," and "Tear 'Em Down".

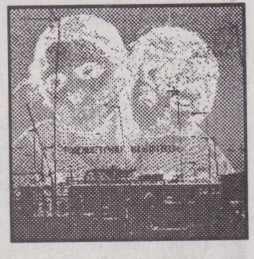
HAMMERLOCK currently has a full length CD on Steelcage Records out of Philadelphia called **Barefoot and Pregnant** that takes the high road to hillbilly punk. First you get to hear "Colorado Mountain Goat," then the slide guitar introduces you to "Nothing to Lose". Fucking bad ass gun-toting punk music spoken here! We slam into "Tie Me Down" that makes the hair stand up on the back of your neck. Travis and LIz trade off vocals on this fucker and it motherfuckin' rocks! Next up, Travis kicks some ass with his song "I Don't Owe You Shit". Then you get a fine treatment of the Willie Nelson/ Waylon Jennings nugget "Good Hearted Woman". You storm through "White Male" and arrive at "Walking with You," which is a great southern rock anthem. The next tune is a fucking brilliant cover of the Charlie Daniels classic, "Long Haired Country Boy". Yeah! HAMMERLOCK do a reprise of give you two more country punk numbers. One is "Jealous Loving Heart" by Ernest Tubb and then "Let It Ride" to close out the evening. A truly fine CD! You must also seek out the current 7" split with HAMMERLOCK and RANCID VAT on Steelcage Records. Excellent!

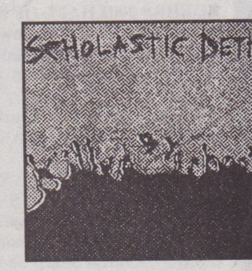
Steelcage's newest offering is a **split 7"** called **"Keep it Flying"** with **ANTiSEEN** and **HELLSTOMPER**, splitting the chores. ANTiSEEN starts off in their continuing effort to ruin your world with a cover of HELLSTOMPER's anthem, "Hellstomper". This is fucking brutal! Mr. Jeff Clayton's voice just drips with venom! Joe Young's guitar playing is not of this earth. A very unsavory and dangerous duo these! Turn the bitch over and you get HELLSTOMPER doing their take on the old MOTORHEAD gem, "White Line Fever". This is very good!

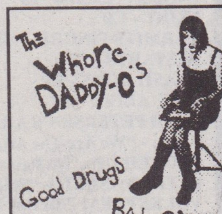
HELLSTOMPER has a tough southern rock **CD** ready for you rednecks - it's called **"Hellbent for Dixie and a Whole Lot More"!**, with the WIDOWMAKER from COCKNOOSE (Deathnoose Ranch, Kansas) singing guest vocals on "Carolina Shine" and doing the liner notes. You get an AC/DC song, you get a lot of country music covers, plus some ANTiSEEN and GG ALLIN covers. This is great shit! Read the set list: "GD Outlaw," "Carolina Shine," "Hellbent for Dixie," "If You Want Blood" (AC/DC), "Southern Giants Medley," "Man to Man" (HANK WILLIAMS, JR), "Trapped in Dixie" (ANTiSEEN), "Whippin' Post" (ALLMAN BROTHERS; "Meatmen," "Ruby," "The Race Is On" (made famous by the great GEORGE JONES), "Pabst Blue Ribbon," "Carolina Shine" - original version, "Back to Berkeley," "Tennessee River," "Prison Ran," "All Pilled Up," "Put Another Log on the Fire," "Raped n' Freezin'" (ALICE COOPER), "Leeches and Losers" (CLAYTON - YOUNG), "If I'd Killed Her When I Met Her," "Up Against the Wall Redneck Mother," "Rowdy Beer Drinkin' NIght" (GG Allin), and "meatmen". Fuckin' great! HELLSTOMPER are one of the leading purveyors of Confederacy of Scum Rock and Roll-Tennessee-style. Write to Proud to be an Idiot Records, 1866 McAllister, San Francisco, CA 94155; www.ptbi.8m.com; email: anusx666@yahoo.com.

TKO also has prepared a full length **LP** by Lawrence, Kansas badmen, **COCKNOOSE**. The compilation of seven inches and unreleased stuff by this band of outlaws is introduced by none other than Jeffrey "Negative Force," Skipski, who put out some early COCKNOOSE material on his infamous Baloney Shrapnel Records, and issued the first COCKNOOSE CD. On this LP you get great songs like "Death Noose," "Alcohol Burnin' Man," "Punk Rock Outlaws," "Fuck You Die," "Livin' On the Run," "The Way It Is," "ALl American Boys," "Treasure Chest" and "Kicked in the Teeth," among other hits. You Confederacy of Scum fans already know about the brute power of COCKNOOSE - The rest of you rock and rollers better start paying attention!! Contact the men in COCKNOOSE at PO Box 442442, Lawrence, Kansas, United States of America.

SONS OF LIBERTY are coming to kick your ass! The SONS OF LIBERTY are comprised of two members of the mighty LIMECELL along with three freinds from Philadelphia. This is some brutal fucking OI! for you knuckleheads! The SONS OF LIBERTY sing four songs about the civil war when brother fought brother and men died from a simple flesh wound. The pride, the fear and the resignation are expressed in great







songs, like "Duty's Call". Bob, who plays guitar in LIMECELL, and Steve who plays bass in LIMECELL, switch duties in SONS OF LIBERTY. Lon is on vocals, Mike plays drums, and Jef is the second guitar player. These bad men start off with "We Shall Meet Again" and then drop a fucking bomb on your house with "December". The guitar playing on this number is scorching! The first song on side two is "The Rogues March" and then the SONS OF LIBERTY fucking slam into the aforementioned "Dity's Call"...Great! You must get this! Write to the SONS OF LIBERTY at PO Box 63565, Philadelphia, PA 19147, USA.

Radio Records (Sonoma, USA) presents **"Battle for the Airwaves, Vol 2"**, featuring "West Coast Punk" vs. "East Coast Oi!". THE WORKIN' STIFFS start off the festivities with "My Ghetto". Lots of fun for skins and punks! THE BODIES follow up the WORKIN' STIFFS with "Wolfboy," about the virtues of cheap, warm beer. Turn the Battle for Airwaves, No. 2 over and you get the WRETCHED ONES - New Jersey Oi! stalwarts playing their song, "Sometimes the Journey is Better than the Destination". This song illustrates that not only can the WRETCHED ONES drink vast quantities of ice cold Schaefer Beer, but they also have deep thought about trials and tribulations we experience during out time on this earth. On the heels of this great WRETCHED ONES' song you get some top quality Oi! from New York's finest, THE TEMPLARS. THE TEMPLARS play, "Raise Your Hand" and it goes like this: "Keep me in my place/ Keep me living in fear/ Don't you rock the boat/ Don't you make no waves/ Gonna work you every day/ Gonna work you like a slave/ Welcome to the rat race." This is a great song! Write to Johnnie for your copy at Radio Records, PO Box 1452, Sonoma, CA 95478

RUNNIN' RIOT from Belfast, Ireland have a great **split 7" EP** on Punkshit Records. This fine split is shared with another excellent streetpunk/skinhead band **TOWER BLOCKS**, from Berlin, Germany. RUNNIN' RIOT kick off the festivities with "Divided Loyalties," about the betrayal of a fellow worker in a union shop. This song has a tough guitar lead plowing through the length of the song with the great gruff singing voice of Colin on vocals. It's more of the sound you've come to love through the Reclaim the Streets and Monks Not Dead LPs on Rejected Records from Dublin. Next you get a skinhead anthem, "Working Class Killing," that is truly inspirational! Flip this EP over and you get another batch of good streetpunk delivered in a punk-as-fuck pair of songs by TOWER BLOCKS. These German skins and punks have a great 80s punk sound! The guys pound you on the head with two good tunes, "General Boredom" and "Drunk in Public". Good guitars back up good lead singing and full choruses from the band. Very memorable! Write to Punkshit Records, 74 Bristmallhall Rd., Old Bury, West Mids, B68 9TU, UK; email: rickmac76@supanet.com.

DISCIPLINE from the Netherlands, have a rocking hot-as-shit four song mini-CD for you fucks on I-Scream Records. These rowdy streetpunks come thrashing out of the cage with two originals. The first tune, "Everywhere We Go," has a really good REDUCERS SF feel to it. The second song, "Dirty World," has a nice AL BARR/BRUISERS ring. Fuck yes! Song number three is a MISFITS cover - how could you go wrong with a hard bit cover of "Astro Zombies"? Song four is a treat—cover of one of ROSE TATTOO's best songs, "One of the Boys". Yeah! This kicks ass! Contact I-Scream Records at www.iscream-records.com.

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NAILED DOWN - "Perth Wolfpack" LP
DEADLINE/FILAMENTS - split EP
VIRUS - "Nowhere To Run" CD
GC 5 - "Horseshoes & Handgrenades" CD
D.S.B. - "Radical Sharp Shot" EP
SNOBS - "Control" EP
SKINT - CD
KERMITS FINGER - "Jacques Jon Benet" EP
RESTARTS - CD
CLASH DOGS - EP
LIFE ALIVE - EP
AMDI PETERSEN'S ARME - EP
E.T.A. - "We Are The Attack" EP
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LOS OLVIDADOS - "Listen To This" CD
An amazing release and an amazing reunion.
YOUR MOTHER - "The Weird Al-bum" 10"
After years of trying to get the final cover finished, this whack pack completes a stellar tribute to the master Weird Al.

ALLAN McNAUGHTON

HOT SNAKES - "Suicide Invoice" LP
Following up their amazing first album, these vets of San Diego bands like PITCHFORK, DRIVE LIKE JEHU, and ROCKET FROM THE CRYPT showed the youngsters how it's done. The second record sounds more like a band than a side-project, and they also showed they could deliver the goods live—one of the best gigs of the year for me.
SCHOLASTIC DETH - "Revenge Of The Nerds" EP and "Killed By School " EP
This pair of seven inches continued the geek-chic bookstore core manifesto that started with last year's "Shackle Me Not" demo/7". Ultimately, it was the thing that bonded them together (education) that divided them. Still, they left behind some great songs and some of the best lyrics in hardcore.
STORM THE TOWER - "Song For FM" EP
This was an impressive debut: DC-influenced hardcore, raw yet melodic. Unfortunately most of the first pressing got incinerated in a fire at Honey Bear's apartment building. It's repressed now and available for the masses, so make it a new year's gift to yourself.
REAGAN SS - "Hail The New Dawn" EP
The second release from the bitterest band in LA saw them pick up where their split with JOHN BROWN'S ARMY left off. This time around there's a little more variety in the parts and speed of the songs. I really hope Matt doesn't give himself an aneurysm, singing like that.
THE GOSSIP - "Arkansas Heat" EP
To be honest I was a little disappointed that the follow-up to THE GOSSIP's excellent first album was only an EP and not another full-length. That said, they still have one of the best singers in rock'n'roll as well as the sassiest front-woman around.
THE SNOBS - "Control" EP
This pre-pubescent Austin, TX band burst onto the scene and proceeded to teach older, slower, jaded punks a thing or two about energetic skate-inspired hardcore. These records would have been great no matter who played the songs, but the fact that these kids are this good at such a young age gives us old fogeys hope for the next generation. PS What's got 100 legs and no pubic hair....? The mosh pit at a SNOBS gig.
ZOUNDS - "This Land/Alone" 45
I approached this new ZOUNDS release with trepidation, only to be pleasantly surprised. Still musically and politically relevant, and putting a lot of today's vapid and vacant 'punk' bands to shame.
AMDI PETERSENS ARMÉ - "Blod Ser Mere Virkeligt Ud Pa Film" EP
Finally a band taking hardcore back for the punks. It's not thrash, it's not grind, it's not crust, it's not metal, and it's not particularly crucial — They just go straight for the jugular with a no-frills BLACK FLAG influenced sound. They played a great gig outside the BART station here last summer as well.
PRETTY GIRLS MAKE GRAVES - "Speakers Push The Air" EP
Ex-Murder City Devils, Death Wish Kids, Area 51, etc with the feel-good hit of the summer. It's hard to imagine these very same people singing songs about dead cops. Their radio-friendly sound is getting them a lot of college airplay and even a video on MTV2, so we wait with bated breath to see if we can even mention their name in the magazine next year.
Honorable mentions:
SHANK - "Coded Messages In Slowed-Down Songs" LP
Musically, this album makes my skin crawl (in a good way) but to be honest I am putting it on here on the strength of the lyrics and lyrical explanations contained in the booklet. "Take me away from this fucking slum... from the skin-popping schemie scum..." It takes longer to read the liner notes than it does to listen to the album but it's worth the effort and it's heartening to see someone think through their opinions and stand by them, regardless of how unpopular they may be.
AGAINST ME! - "Is Reinventing Axl Rose" LP
This is probably one of the few records from this list I'll still be pulling out in five years. You never know though.
CALVARY - "Outnumbered Is Outflanked" LP
I was initially put off by the way this band's influences were worn so much on its sleeve, but it's grown on me and I can now see beyond that and hear the songs under the sound. Definitely a great record.
SHARP KNIFE - LP
Local band debut album of the year.
This year has also been rich on the reissue/bootleg front - I could have made another whole column out of this list of welcome nostalgia-inspiring re-releases from 2002:
BIG BOYS, JAWBREAKER, 20 Years Of Dischord, ADVERTS, DISAFFECT, ROCKET FROM THE TOMBS, CONFLICT, JERRY'S KIDS, THE FALL, BAD BRAINS, and ARTICLES OF FAITH, among many others. Don't mention the war - I mentioned it once but I think I got away with it.

PAUL CURRAN - MRR Radio

Doing the radio show has introduced me to some incredibly great new punk rock. I'll mark this as the year I got back into hardcore. Always a fan of more melodic and catchy punk, I find myself listening to some crazy harsh shit these days, as well as the bands that are keeping punk tuneful without sounding wimpy or stupid. Here's my faves this year:
BITCHIN' - "The Night Life, the Tight Style" LP
Fantastic, gutsy, well-written tunes from this Gainesville trio. Pure mix tape fare. Why isn't this on anyone else's top ten? Well, if Arwen woulda done one it would be on hers too.
BORN/DEAD - "24 Hostages" EP
Hardcore the way it should be. Brutal *and* catchy.
ROCK & ROLL HERO MAN - "Rock & Roll Hero Man/Try It" 45
Who the hell is this band? Possibly Swedish or English, this is the power-pop hit of the year.
WORLD BURNS TO DEATH - "Sucking of the Missile Cock" LP
Maybe I just like this for the cover, but this is fucking killer Texas hardcore with hilarious, yet surprisingly smart lyrics, a la SPAZM 151.
THE DISKORDS - "Heart Full of Napalm" EP
Perhaps overshadowed by THE SNOBS as this year's super-young new punk torch-bearers, THE DISKORDS show a much more (ahem) mature and less derivative song writing style than just about anybody playing old-school punk rock nowadays.
HUL - "Den Danske Ungdom" LP
Wow! Danish punk that sound a bit like ASTA KASK only more hardcore. Wicked awesome.
THIS BIKE IS A PIPE BOMB - "Front Seat Solidarity"
I first discovered this band when I rescued their first 7" from the MRR reject bin about 7 years ago. Now everyone here loves 'em. Go figure. The PIPE BOMB/BANANAS one-two punch was definitely this year's best live show. This LP doesn't quite match their live greatness but the songs are so freaking good that it don't matter. Get all their stuff.
JUGGLING JUGULARS/INNER CONFLICT - split EP
Two driving European punk bands with female vocals. Suberb!
PETROGRAD - "Nineoneone" LP
Yeah, there actually are some good emo bands. But apparently you have to go to Luxemburg to find them. Actually there's a lot of variety on this album. There's something for everyone to love and to hate on here. The first track makes this album one of the year's best.
FORCED VENGEANCE - "Stay On the Mountain" EP
Region Rock at it's finest. The dual male-female vocals make this sound pretty bizarre at first but then it grows on you. Then you can't stop listening to it. Then you obsessively bug the band members until they get you a copy cuz no stores have it. Man what a wild, fucked-up year.

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INTERVIEW IN MAXIMUM ROCK&ROLL Issue 233/Oct 2002
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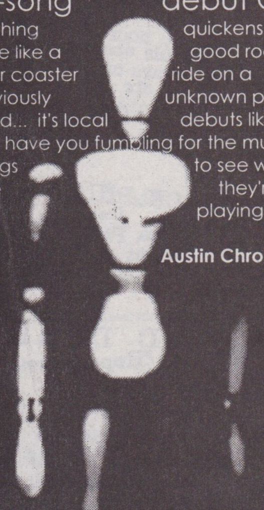

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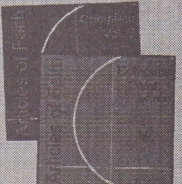

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MRR NEWS

No. 237
Feb. 2003
compiled by:
Arwen Curry

AN EARLY PEEK INTO HOMELAND SECURITY

by Vatche Sahakian

Fear can be a powerful driving force for resolute and determined action; albeit action that is often irrational and self-defeating. Hence, the use of tension in society has long been a powerful tool for controlling and rallying the masses. History abounds with uncountable instances of governments or leaders manipulating entire populations towards consent, for goals and wars that serve narrow ill-defined purposes; and too often with great calamity to many.

The post September 11 atmosphere in the US can certainly be qualified as tense. Furthermore, fear of further attacks—with various sinister scenarios—has been effectively drummed up by the mainstream media. As a result, a series of new regulations have been adopted during the past year as part of the "Patriot Act" purportedly to reduce the chances of repeats of the tragedy of September 11. Taken at face value, many of these new laws appear well intended. With a closer look, they can be seen to be general enough so as to have great potential for abuse; to be directed for purposes unrelated to the original intent. Purposes that can perhaps be solely political; or that can embolden those elements in every society that accord to racist ideologies.

On November 22, 2002, the INS announced that nationals of certain countries with non-immigrant status, who intend to be in the US through January, need to register with an INS office. The regulation appears innocent enough except for several subtleties. For one, the deadline for registration was set to January 10, 2003; and the announcement was rather discrete. Mostly unreported in the mainstream media, along with not much of an effort on the part of the INS to notify people affected by the new regulation, most would miss the deadline and hence be in violation of immigration law (punishable by jail time or deportation). Furthermore, many who have proceeded to registration have been detained for minor irregularities in their paperwork. Some have been jailed, denied due process, others released on bail; at one INS office, the agents ran out off handcuffs in the frenzy of arresting people who showed up to register. The number of arrested people, as of the writing of this article, is believed to be between 500 and 2000. Naturally panic is ensuing amongst otherwise law-abiding ethnic communities.

It has been argued by INS officials that the law does not constitute "racial profiling" since the criterion for selecting foreigners is country of birth. This is a hint into the spirit of the decision-making process adopted: "racial profiling" is bad because it is politically incorrect; not because of the moral implications. Profiling and targeting anyone based on factors that he/she cannot be in control of, such as his/her race, skin color, or birthplace, is at best ridiculous; at worse morally corrupt. And shall we assume that some at the INS are under the impression that terrorists would be willingly lining up at INS offices to register? And was a few weeks worth of notice without proper community outreach intended to be enough time to register an estimated 10,000 visitors?

The list of November 22 included 13 countries, mostly Arabic—yet with Saudi Arabia missing from the list; i.e. the country of origin for 15 of the 19 September 11 hijackers. Hence, there was an understanding that the policies of the INS are driven by narrow economic interests in oil at the expense of some ill-defined attempt at achieving security for the country. Correspondingly, pressure has been mounting on the administration to include Saudi Arabia in this privileged list. This yet is not the real point of contention. In many respects, corruption by financial interests, while potentially destructive, is not the most prominent form of danger to civil society.

An amendment to the November 22 law, released on December 16, reveals a whole new layer that serves a first probe into the minds of those behind this new drive and hype of securing the homeland. The new amendment extended the original list of countries by three additions: Pakistan, Saudi Arabia; and Armenia.

While the addition of Pakistan and Saudi Arabia to the list is interesting enough, the appearance of Armenia is more revealing. Armenia is a small country in the Caucasus populated by about three million Christians. Armenia today is a rather poor ex-soviet republic, democratic and vehemently anti-communist. Relations with the US are warm; with Armenia being near the top of the list of recipients of US aid (per capita). And Armenians have long been the victims of Islamic extremism. In 1915, the Armenian Genocide resulted in the destruction of three fourths of the Armenian population of the region. The perpetrators of the crime, members of the Young Turk party, successfully employed Islamic fundamentalism to set the stage for the killings; and they were never brought to justice due to narrow political interests that prevailed in European politics of the times. This impunity is known by many Holocaust scholars to have set the stage for the 1945 Genocide of the Jews (which in turn had in it an element of Christian fundamentalism). Today, most Armenians live outside Armenia, a total of six million scattered across all continents. Nine out of ten are descendents of survivors of the Genocide, most tracing back their roots to a handful of concentration camps in the Syrian desert. After September 11, 2001, Armenians were very quick to rally behind the US, identifying Islamic fundamentalism as a common enemy. So, why then Armenia appeared on the INS list?

There are different possible answers to this. There is always the possibility that this was a genuine mistake. Given the importance of the decision and the level at which these regulations have been handled in the recent past, this scenario is not likely. Indeed, an INS spokesman was quoted recently in the *LA Times* as refusing to acknowledge that this was an error. The reasons for Armenia's inclusion in the list may then range from political to racial. Political in a sense unrelated to terrorism. Racial in the sense that is generally well-understood; that foreign nationals are often regarded as undesirables; be they Mexicans, Egyptians, or Armenians. Yet, singling out Armenians amongst others makes a racial motivation less likely. A political answer to the question is more reasonable.

Before speculating on a political motivation, let us emphasize the main point, irrespective of the upcoming details. A legal framework established with the intent to increase security (whether we agree about its effectiveness or not) has been diverted to satisfy an unrelated political goal. Political influences and games in the ruling circles get direct access to the organs established for the purposes of "homeland security". The potential for abuse and the corresponding danger to society is testified to by modern history itself.

As for the political motivations in question, the easiest way to go about this analysis is to compare the political issues at hand in the context of other countries not on the list but that share various similarities and differences with Armenia. The idea is to look for what sets apart Armenia from other potential "candidates". And then one is left with only one political context.

For the past 80 years, an international political struggle has ensued between the Armenian Diaspora and Turkish governments. Turkey has repeatedly denied that the events of 1915 were of Genocidal intent, qualifying them as part of a civil war. Turkey today is a country effectively run by its military, with several military coups having occupied its political stage in the past dozens of years. It is also near the top of the list of countries with most journalists in jail, as well as being repeatedly admonished by human rights organizations for its brutal treatment of its minorities, in particular the Kurds that live across the border from Iraq. Turkey's tactics in recent years to refute the Genocide of 1915 have been nothing but remarkable, both in innovation and extent. These ranged from the funding of chairs at American universities with strings attached, to outright threats to governments who would be considering mention of the events of 1915 in ceremonies commemorating human rights. A good analogy is to imagine a neo-Nazi Germany today that accords to an official policy of denying the Holocaust and glorifies the architects of the Holocaust. While the UN, the Vatican, and the European Union have repeatedly affirmed the events of 1915 as Genocide, successive Turkish governments still resist this characterization. This matter has become an issue in the candidacy of Turkey to the European Union. Last week, France effectively vetoed Turkey's membership. France has a large and politically influential Armenian community formed through the influx of refugees from the events of 1915.

Yet Turkey is a US ally, and a member of NATO. There are yet more elaborate layers to the issue. The Republic of Armenia plays a geopolitically somewhat strategic role in the Caspian basin, where large oil reserves have lured many US and British oil companies in the past few years. And Turkey is involved at various levels in this Caspian oil consortium. Furthermore, Turkey is also expected to play a supporting role in the upcoming Iraq war that we are being psychologically prepared for. The week prior to the announcement of the amendment to the INS law in question, Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz concluded a visit to Turkey; and Turkey's new leader Recep Tayyip Erdogan was visiting Washington. Meanwhile, the European Union, on France's insistence, postponed the talks on Turkish membership to 2004.

The recent amendment to the INS law may have well been intended to send a message to a million Americans of Armenian decent. The message is: we have acquired new means of pressure in an old dirty game. This is a political game that is at best an annoyance to US economic policy, and at worst a racially charged insult to Armenians.

During the days following the addition of Armenia to the list (leaked to the press on December 13), Armenian-Americans mounted a political campaign of protest. Within 24 hours, ten thousand faxes were sent to president Bush. A day later, the INS removed Armenia from the list. It appears some had underestimated the resolve and the numbers of Americans who would be aware of the matters. A crucial role in this grassroots campaign was played by many non-Armenian Americans who would not tolerate such game play. On December 17, the Turkish foreign minister announced that his government might adopt a change in policy with regards to Armenia, pursuing constructive and friendly relations.

It seems that, in the decision making process, the new department of homeland security consults the interests of foreign governments before those of American citizens. And many our now asking: was this about vile corruption or extreme incompetence? The moral of the story is yet simple. Beware of any attempt to strengthen government at the expense of the individual. With shifting political winds, these are the very means that can serve forces more dangerous than corruption and economic elitism. At the end, no one is really out of reach.

ROLLING THE DICE ON OUR NATION'S HEALTH

by Holly Sklar

Imagine if the first people infected in a smallpox attack had no health insurance and delayed seeking care for their flu-like symptoms. The odds are high.

Pick a number from one to six. Would you bet your life on a roll of the dice? Would you play Russian Roulette with one bullet in a six-chamber gun?

One in six Americans under age 65 has no health insurance. The uninsured are more likely to delay seeking medical care, go to work sick for fear of losing their jobs, seek care at overcrowded emergency rooms and clinics, and be poorly diagnosed and treated.

The longer smallpox—or another contagious disease—goes undiagnosed, the more it will spread, with the insured and uninsured infecting each other.

Healthcare is literally a matter of life and death. Yet, more than 41 million Americans have no health insurance of any kind, public or private. The uninsured rate was 14.6 percent in 2001—up 13 percent since 1987. The rate is on the rise with increased healthcare costs, unemployment, and cutbacks in Medicaid and the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP).

One in four people with household incomes less than $25,000 is uninsured. One in six full-time workers is uninsured, including half the full-time workers with incomes below the official poverty line.

The share of workers covered by employment health plans drops from 81 percent in the top fifth of wage earners to 68 percent in the middle fifth to 33 percent in the lowest fifth, according to the Economic Policy Institute.

As reports by the American College of Physicians, Kaiser Family Foundation and many others have shown, lack of health insurance is associated with lack of preventive care and substandard treatment inside and outside the hospital. The uninsured are at much higher risk for chronic disease and disability, and have a 25 percent greater chance of dying (adjusting for physical, economic and behavioral factors).

To make matters worse, a health crisis is often an economic crisis. "Medical bills are a factor in nearly half of all personal bankruptcy filings," reports the National Academy of Sciences Institute of Medicine.

The US is No. 1 in healthcare spending per capita, but No. 34—tied with Malaysia—when it comes to child mortality rates under age five.

The US is No. 1 in healthcare spending, but the only major industrialized nation not to provide some form of universal coverage.

We squander billions of dollars in the red tape of myriad healthcare eligibility regulations, forms and procedures, and second-guessing of doctors by insurance gatekeepers trained in cost cutting, not medicine. Americans go to Canada for cheaper prices on prescription drugs made by US pharmaceutical companies with US taxpayer subsidies.

While millions go without healthcare, top health company executives rake in the dough. A report by Families USA found that the highest-paid health plan executives in ten companies received average compensation of $11.7 million in 2000, not counting unexercised stock options worth tens of millions more.

The saying, "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure," couldn't be truer when it comes to healthcare. Yet, we provide universal coverage for seniors through Medicare, but not for children. We have economic disincentives for timely diagnosis and treatment of diseases.

Universal healthcare is a humane and cost-effective solution to the growing healthcare crisis. Universal coverage won't come easy, but neither did Social Security or Medicare, which now serves one in seven Americans. Many proposals for universal healthcare build on the foundation of "Medicare for All," albeit an improved Medicare adequately serving seniors and younger people alike.

Healthcare is as essential to equal opportunity as public education and as essential to public safety as police and fire protection. If your neighbor's house were burning, would you want 911 operators to ask for their fire insurance card number before sending—or not sending—fire trucks?

Healthcare ranked second behind terrorism and national security as the most critical issue for the nation in the 2002 Health Confidence Survey released by the Employee Benefit Research Institute.

The government thinks the smallpox threat is serious enough to start inoculating military and medical personnel with a highly risky vaccine. It's time to stop delaying universal healthcare, which will save lives everyday while boosting our readiness for any bioterror attack.

Holly Sklar is coauthor of "Raise the Floor: Wages and Policies That Work for All Of Us" (www.raisethefloor.org). She can be reached at hsklar@aol.com.

JOURNALISTS ARE UNDER FIRE FOR TELLING THE TRUTH

by Robert Fisk
published by the Independent/UK

First it was Roger Ailes, the chairman of the Fox News Channel, who advised the US President to take the "harshest measures possible" against those who attacked America on 11 September, 2001.

Let us forget, for a moment, that Fox News's Jerusalem bureau chief is Uri Dan, a friend of Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and the author of the preface of the new edition of Sharon's autobiography, which includes a revolting account of the Sabra and Chatila massacre of 1,700 Palestinian civilians and Sharon's innocence in this slaughter. Then Ted Koppel, one of America's leading news anchormen, announced that it may be a journalist's duty not to reveal events until the military want them revealed in a new war against Iraq.

Can we go any further in journalistic cowardice? Oh yes, we can. ABC television announced, a little while ago, that it knew all about the killing of four al-Qa'ida members by an unmanned "Predator" plane in Yemen but delayed broadcasting the news for four days "at the request of the Pentagon." So now at least we know for whom ABC works.

The Pentagon said that the murdered men—and let's not lose sight of the "murdered" bit, though that's not the word ABC used—were between "two to 20" of the top ranks of al-Qa'ida. Really? So were they numbers two, three, four and five in al-Qa'ida? Or numbers 17,18,19 and 20? Who cares? The press are onside. Don't ask who is resisting forthcoming US censorship of the Iraq war. Ask who is first to climb aboard the bandwagon.

In Canada, the situation is even worse. Canwest, owned by Israel Asper, owns over 130 newspapers in Canada, including 14 city dailies and one of the country's largest papers, the *National Post*. His "journalists" have attacked colleagues who have deviated from Mr. Asper's pro-Israel editorials. As Index on Censorship reported, Bill Marsden, an investigative reporter for the *Montreal Gazette* has been monitoring Canwest's interference with its own papers. "They do not want any criticism of Israel," he wrote. "We do not run in our newspaper op-ed pieces that express criticism of Israel and what it is doing in the Middle East..."

But now, "Izzy" Asper has written a gutless and repulsive editorial in the Post in which he attacks his own journalists, falsely accusing reporters of "lazy, sloppy or stupid" journalism and being "biased or anti-Semitic." These vile slanders are familiar to any reporter trying to do his work on the ground in the Middle East. They are made even more revolting by inaccuracies.

Mr. Asper, for example, claims that my colleague Phil Reeves compared the Israeli killings in Jenin earlier this year—which included a goodly few war crimes (the crushing to death of a man in a wheelchair, for example)—to the "killing fields of Pol Pot." Now Mr. Reeves has never mentioned Pol Pot. But Mr. Asper wrongly claims that he did.

It gets worse. Mr. Asper, whose "lazy, sloppy or stupid" allegations against journalists in reality apply to himself, states—in the address to an Israel Bonds Gala Dinner in Montreal, which formed the basis of his preposterous article—that "in 1917, Britain and the League of Nations declared, with world approval, that a Jewish state would be established in Palestine." Now hold on a moment. The Balfour Declaration of 1917 did not say that a Jewish state would be established. It said that the British government would "view with favor the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people." The British refused to use the words "Jewish state."

This may not matter much to lazy writers like Mr. Aspen. But when it comes to the League of Nations being involved, we really are into mythology. The League of Nations was created after the First World War—had it existed in 1917, it might have stopped the whole war—and Mr. Asper is simply wrong (or, as he might have put it, "lazy, sloppy or stupid") to suggest it existed in 1917.

At no point, of course, does Mr. Asper tell us about Israeli occupation or the building of Jewish settlements, for Jews and Jews only, upon Arab land. He talks about "alleged Palestinian refugees"—about as wrongheaded a remark as you can get—and then claims that the corrupt and foolish Yasser Arafat is "one of the world's cruel and most vicious terrorists for the past 30 years." He concluded his speech to Israel's supporters in Montreal with the dangerous request that "you, the public, must take action against the media wrongdoers."

Wrongdoers? Is this far from President Bush's "evildoers"? What in the hell is going on here?

I will tell you. Journalists are being attacked for telling the truth, for trying to tell it how it is. American journalists especially. I urge them to read a remarkable new book published by the New York University Press and edited by John Collins and Ross Glover. It's called *Collateral Language* and is, in its own words, intended to expose "the tyranny of political rhetoric." Its chapter titles—"Anthrax," "Cowardice," "Evil," "Freedom," Fundamentalism," "Justice," "Terrorism," Vital Interests" and—my favorite– "The War on..." (fill in the missing country) tell it all.

Meanwhile, rest assured, the journalists are getting onside, to tell you the story the government wants you to hear.

SENATOR LOTT AND THE LEGACY OF RACE

by John Buell
published by CommonDreams.org

Even many Republicans are rightly appalled by Trent Lott's nostalgic appeal to Southern segregationism and the Dixiecrats. The Lott controversy, however, raises larger questions about the ways both major parties continue to incite and appeal to race in various guises in order to achieve fragile governing coalitions. Unloading Lott may be just what Republicans need. Nonetheless, his forced exodus distracts us from the more insidious role race continues to play in our political life.

As far back as the late nineteenth century, some southern populists tried to build a biracial coalition on anti-corporate, anti-banks, anti-rail programs, only to see that coalition splintered. Southern Democrats fostered what is now widely recognized as a vast myth of vicious black crime and rapacious black male sexuality and thereby exacerbated long standing racial fears.

Poor and working class southern whites in effect were offered a bargain. In exchange for accepting a subordinate role in the economy and workplace, they gained membership in the whites only club. Members could attend the same churches, social gatherings, and recreational amenities, and before the criminal justice system all were awarded the benefit of the doubt.

Like turn of the twentieth century Democrats, today's Republicans need many rural and working class whites. Their economic agenda serves the interests of at most ten percent of the population and perhaps thirty percent of those who actually vote. Republicans cannot thrive on stock options and estate tax give-aways alone. But they also need to retain the support of many affluent and generally well educated white professional men and women. Though racial equality may not constitute the latter's central political concerns, part of their self-identity lies in a commitment to educational, economic, and social opportunity for all.

In such a context, racial politics must be played in a more subtle way. Appeals to race are part of an ongoing Republican Party strategy, especially in some hotly contested Senatorial races and occasionally even at the Presidential level.

What generally works best is tacit appeals to race, such as Ronald Reagan's choice of Philadelphia, Mississippi with his accompanying defense of states rights to launch his 1980 campaign or the infamous Willie Horton ads during the elder Bush 's 1988 campaign. These tactics were controversial and were labeled racist by some commentators, but the criticism never gained traction.

Reagan's rhetoric lacked Lott's explicit celebration of legal segregation. Nonetheless, his choice of a venue and message subtly told the audience "I share your concerns, but you and I know that direct appeals to race would call down the wrath of the (powerful liberal media)." Republicans scored the triple triumph of building on a rural minority's fears about race, its sense of exclusion from mainstream culture, and lingering anti-corporate bias. The authors of such a strategy were properly recognized as masters of their craft. Lott's overt appeals to a racist past, however, makes most Republican strategists wince.

Though some Democrats may enjoy Republican discomfort over this incident, they must acknowledge the modern Democratic politics of race. Democrats hope to construct coalitions by appealing to urban minorities even as some of their traditional labor base is repelled by those minorities. Many Democrats have eagerly endorsed drug wars, sexual abstinence, and school standard campaigns that have always disproportionately affected and targeted minority communities

Progressive Democrats can't and shouldn't give up the quest to build a more economically just society. Without greater social justice for working class whites, racism will remain an all too easy default option for many rural and working class whites. Nonetheless, progressives need to recognize that economics will never automatically trump race—or gender. Race in some form has long been part of the code by which many Americans define themselves and even tame their deepest personal demons and insecurities. Many of our forbidden pleasures, whether drugs, sexuality, bodily expression, though widely dispersed among the whole population, are disproportionately sanctioned in and projected onto those of different color. Like Trent Lott, we make life easier on ourselves by imagining that without the misfortune of "their" mixture in our midst, we would not suffer "all those problems."

There is no way out of our racial conundrums without acknowledging the psycho-social origins of race as a central theme in our politics. .Part of that process must be to nurture forms of identity that are less reliant on domination and exclusion of those whose only difference lies in ethnic origin, history, or crudely elaborated physical differences. Ultimately,more expansive forms of identity can embrace not only those who differ but also the dissonant currents within ourselves. As Walt Whitman recognized, great nations and individuals contain multitudes. Their greatness lies in working always to fold as much of the surging currents of humanity as possible into a sustainable individual and collective life. If the politics of race stops merely with an appropriate censure of Senator Lott, it will fall far short of our needs.

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WAR ON IRAQ COULD BOOST INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM: RUSSIA

published by Agence France Presse

Russia warned that military strikes against Iraq could take the world's focus off the ongoing military campaign in Afghanistan and lead to the spread of international terrorism.

"Switching the focus off Afghanistan and shifting it to Iraq may augment the threat of international terrorism which is coming from Afghan territories that are not under Kabul's control," Deputy Foreign Minister Yury Fedotov told the ITAR-TASS news agency.

He reiterated Russia's view that the international community currently had no proof of a link between the Iraqi regime and international terror organizations.

"Nobody has been able to provide any evidence of this link," said Fedotov in reference to one of the main arguments from Washington in favor of toppling President Saddam Hussein's regime.

Russia is opposed to a unilateral US military intervention against Iraq that has been threatened by Washington if Baghdad should be considered to be in material breach of UN Security Council resolution 1441, which orders it to completely give up weapons of mass destruction.

Both Washington and London have criticized Iraq's weapons declaration, presented to the UN on December 7, as inadequate.

But Russia argues that a military campaign must not be launched without backing from the UN Security Council, where it wields veto power as a permanent member.

The Security Council "must rule on its own whether Iraq is complying with resolution 1441, and whether it is in breach of this document or not," Fedotov said.

The second inspectors' report to the UN Security Council is to be presented on January 27 and several US newspapers have reported that Washington plans to launch an assault on Iraq the following month.

However NATO Secretary General George Robertson—who has been approached by Washington for assistance in any campaign—said on Thursday that the Bush administration was prepared to consult the United Nations, despite "a certain amount of rhetoric."

"Up to now the United States has kept very rigidly to the United Nations route. They still do, the inspectors are still there," Robertson told the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC).

"There is a certain amount of rhetoric, but in reality President Bush has strongly placed his country in the fold of NATO and also within international, multilateral institutions," he added.

Fedotov confirmed that Moscow wanted Iraq to fully comply with weapons inspections and for the United States and Britain to give the investigators time to do their work before drawing up war plans.

And as one of Iraq's main backers in the international arena Fedotov said Russia would press for a reevaluation of a UN sanctions regime against Iraq should Saddam's government provide unfettered access to inspectors.

"As Iraq's cooperation with the international community grows, we have to clarify the prospects of lifting the existing sanctions against Iraq," said Fedotov, who oversees Russia's negotiations with the United Nations.

Iraq on Tuesday accused the United States and Britain of blocking contracts worth 7.4 billion dollars from being approved under the current UN oil-for-food program.

Iraq has been under UN trade sanctions since its invasion of Kuwait in 1990. The oil-for-food program, instituted in 1996, allows Iraq to buy food, medicine and other basic necessities in exchange for oil exports.

Russia—which holds a large chunk of the Iraq oil export contracts and has major investments in the country's all-but-frozen oil industry—is seeking to simplify the sanctions list during ongoing negotiations with the United States.

Only a lifting of sanctions, along with Iraq's cooperation on weapons inspections, "can lead to a long-term solution to the Iraqi problem," Fedotov said.

Paper Leaks Companies Involved with Iraqi Weapons

Independent

Iraq's 11,000-word report to the UN Security Council lists the names of 150 foreign companies including those in Germany, America, Britain, and France that actively supported Saddam Hussein's weapons of mass destruction programme, a German newspaper claimed yesterday.

Berlin's left-wing *Die Tageszeitung* newspaper said it had gained access to a copy of the original Iraqi dossier to the UN which was vetted for sensitive information by US officials before being handed to the permanent five Security Council members two weeks ago. An edited version was passed to the remaining 10 members of the Security Council last night.

British officials said the list of companies appeared to be accurate. It is assumed the report was leaked by Iraq in order to embarrass the US and its allies—by showing the close involvement of US, German, British, and French firms in helping Iraq develop its weapons of mass destruction, when it was bulwark against the the much feared spread of Iranian revolutionary fervour to the Arab world.

The newspaper said 80 German firms and 24 US companies had supplied Iraq with equipment and know-how for its weapons programmes from 1975 onwards and in some cases support for Baghdad's conventional arms programme had continued right up until last year.

"The dossier is explosive: it details exactly what each company supplied and which methods each used to try and cover up its involvement," the paper said.

The list contained the names of long-established German firms such as Siemens, as well as US multinationals. With government approval, Siemens exported machines used to eliminate kidney stones which have a 'dual use' high precision switch used to detonate nuclear bombs. Ten French companies were also named along with a number of Swiss and Chinese firms.

The newspaper said a number of British companies were also cited in the report but it did not name them.

"From about 1975 onwards, these companies are shown to have supplied entire complexes, building elements, basic materials, and technical know-how for Saddam Hussein's programme to develop nuclear, chemical and biological weapons of mass destruction," the newspaper said. "They also supplied rockets and complete conventional weapons systems."

Die Tageszeitung said the Iraqi report suggested that foreign support for Baghdad's nuclear and biological weapons programme had continued in defiance of international embargoes banning such assistance which came into force in the mid 1970s and UN sanctions imposed on Iraq following its invasion of Kuwait in 1990.

The five permanent members of the UN Security Council, the United States, Britain, Russia, France and China, have repeatedly opposed revealing the extent of foreign companies' involvment in Baghdad's weapons programme, although a mass of relevant information was collected by UN weapons inspectors who visited the country between 1991 and 1998.

The Security Council has argued repeatedly that publishing the extent of these companies' involvement in Iraq would jeopardise the necessary cooperation with such firms. *Die Tageszeitung* said that with eighty firms listed in the report, German involvement in Iraq outstripped that of all the other countries put together.

Alarm as GM Pig Vaccine Taints US Crops

by Suzanne Goldenberg in Washington
published by the *Guardian/UK*

US authorities, shaken by a case in which food crops were contaminated with an experimental pig vaccine, are preparing to impose stringent guidelines on a new generation of experimental GM crops.

The department of agriculture and the environmental protection agency are encountering growing disquiet from a coalition of farmers and food manufacturers about the potential dangers of the next phase of GM products— "biopharming," or the implanting of genes in food crops to grow drugs and industrial chemicals.

The idea of tightening regulations on GM products represents something of a revolution in thinking in the US, where about 70% of the processed food on supermarket shelves contains genetically engineered ingredients.

But concerns have arisen after a small biotech firm in Texas was fined $3m (£2m) for tainting half a million bushels of soya bean with a trial vaccine used to prevent stomach upsets in piglets.

Under a settlement reached this month, the first of its kind against any biotech company in the US, a firm called Prodigene agreed to pay a fine of $250,000 and to repay the government for the cost of incinerating the Soya bean that had been contaminated with genetically altered corn.

US authorities said the corn did not reach food crops or animal feed. But the episode has drawn unwelcome attention to an as yet experimental area of GM farming.

The premise behind biopharming, or "pharming" for short, is that genetic tinkering can turn an ordinary-looking corn or barley field into a potential drug factory, producing insulin, chemotherapy drugs, and other products for much less than it would cost to set up an industrial plant.

At present, two dozen trials of the experimental GM drugs are under way across the US.

The biotech firms argue that the new technique can revolutionize health care, especially in the developing world where hospitals short on syringes can dispense edible drugs. But in the wake of the Texas case, questions are being asked.

The latest incident was the worst violation so far of regulations intended to keep biopharming out of the food supply. It was also seen as the most serious setback to date to the next generation of GM farming.

Until now, genetic engineering has been used mainly to make crops such as corn and Soya bean resistant to insects and disease, and the US food industry has been solidly on side.

The Texas alarm has begun to change that. "The incident overall just reaffirms our concerns that something could go wrong," Stephanie Childs of the Grocery Manufacturers of America, which represents food companies such as Kellogg and General Mills, told the *Los Angeles Times.*

Analysts in Washington said yesterday that they expected the department of agriculture to impose more stringent guidelines next year. Published reports said yesterday that guidelines under consideration by the authorities include moving experimental farms away from America's grain belt in the mid-west, or requiring growers to dye the leaves of the altered crops.

The agriculture department's disciplinary measures against the small Texas firm have crystallized concerns among farmers, environmentalists and industry about the risks of experimental vaccine crops getting into the food supply.

"The department of agriculture wanted to send a signal that the companies need to take the obligation to protect the food supply very seriously," Michael Rodemeyer, the director of Washington's Pew Initiative on Food and Biotechnology, said yesterday.

"The whole issue of growing pharmaceuticals in food crops has certainly raised concern within the food industry, as well as among environmentalists and others, about genes from these crops getting into the food supply."

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US, INDIA SCORE "WIN" AGAINST INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT

published by Agence France Presse

India and the United States signed a pact under which they agreed not to send each other's nationals to a world tribunal, in a victory for Washington's efforts to scuttle the International Criminal Court.

At least 14 other countries have already signed such agreements with the United States, but India is significant as most of the others are small or closely identified as US allies.

The US-India agreement states there will be "non-extradition of nationals of either country to any international tribunal without the other country's express consent."

It was signed by Indian Foreign Secretary Kanwal Sibal, the top bureaucrat in the foreign ministry, and the US ambassador to India, Robert Blackwill.

"India and the United States share the strongest possible commitment to bringing to justice those who commit war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide," Blackwill told reporters after the signing.

"However, we are concerned about the International Criminal Court (ICC) treaty with respect to the adequacy of checks and balances, the impact of the treaty on national sovereignty and the potential for conflict with the UN Charter," he said.

US President George W. Bush's administration strongly opposes the ICC, saying the tribunal could bring politically motivated charges against Americans, including civilian military contractors and former officials.

The Rome statute setting up the ICC was signed by former US president Bill Clinton, but he urged his successor not to ratify participation in the court until Washington resolved its concerns.

India has neither signed nor ratified the ICC.

Nonetheless, a total of 139 countries have signed the Rome statute and 87 have ratified it, according to non-governmental organizations.

The ICC enjoys support of many US allies, particularly in Europe and it officially opened in The Hague in July. Eighteen judges are expected to be elected to the world's first permanent international court in February.

The court theoretically has universal jurisdiction, but can only prosecute if thestate where the crimes were committed or the state of the nationality of the accused are party to the statute.

Faced with the creation of the ICC, the United States has instead been trying to reach bilateral agreements under which countries will pledge not to extradite any US national to an international court.

Others that have signed non-extradition agreements with Washington are Afghanistan, the Dominican Republic, East Timor, El Salvador, Gambia, Honduras, Israel, the Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Micronesia, Palau, Romania, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

John Bolton, the US under secretary of state for arms control and international security, said November 14 that Washington was focusing its efforts on non-extradition with countries in South Asia and the Middle East.

But US officials have been quiet about which specific countries were being targeted for immunity deals to avoid pressure being placed on the governments in question.

An Indian official said New Delhi was disappointed with the ICC because it did not see the court playing a role in the fight against international terrorism.

India was an early supporter of the United Nations and other international institutions, but over time has become angered by periodic attempts by Pakistan to bring the Kashmir dispute to global fora.

The Indian side of divided Kashmir is in the throes of a bloody 13-year Islamic separatist insurgency which New Delhi accuses Pakistan of supporting.

"This accord is emblematic of the continuing cooperation between India and the United States," India's foreign ministry spokesman Navtej Sarna told reporters.

India immediately joined the US-led "coalition against terrorism" last year and in May the countries held their first joint military exercises in nearly four decades.

US STILL INTERVENING AGAINST DEMOCRACY IN VENEZUELA

by Mark Weisbrot

CARACAS—"Where are they getting their money?" asks historian Samuel Moncada, as the television displays one opposition commercial after another. Moncada is chair of the history department at Central University of Venezuela in Caracas. We are sitting in one of the few restaurants that is open in the eastern, wealthier part of Caracas.

For two weeks during this country's business-led strike, the privately owned stations that dominate Venezuelan television have been running opposition "info-mercials" instead of advertisements, in addition to what is often non-stop coverage of opposition protests.

"I am sure there is money from abroad," asserts Moncada. It's a good guess: prior to the coup on April 11, the US National Endowment for Democracy stepped up its funding to opposition groups, including money funneled through the International Republican Institute. The latter's funding multiplied more than sixfold, to $340,000 in 2001.

But if history is any guide, overt funding from Washington will turn out to be the tip of the iceberg. This was the case in Haiti, Nicaragua, Chile, and other countries where Washington has sought "regime change" because our leaders didn't agree with the voters' choice at the polls. (In fact, Washington is currently aiding efforts to oust President Aristide in Haiti—for the second time). In these episodes, which extended into the 1990s, our government concealed amounts up to the hundreds of millions of dollars that paid for such things as death squads, strikes, economic destabilization, electoral campaigns, and media.

All this remains to be investigated in this case. But the intentions of the US government are clear. Last week the State Department ordered non-essential embassy personnel to leave the country, and warned American citizens not to travel here. But there have not been attacks on American citizens or companies here, from either side of the political divide, and this is not a particularly dangerous place for Americans to be.

In this situation, the State Department's extreme measures and warning can only be interpreted as a threat. The Bush Administration has also openly sided with the opposition, demanding early elections here. Then this week Washington changed its position to demanding a referendum on Chavez's presidency, most likely figuring that a divided opposition could easily lose to Chavez in an election, despite its overwhelming advantage in controlling the major means of communication.

The discussion in the US press, dominated by Washington's views, has also taken on an Orwellian tone. Chavez is accused of using "dictatorial powers" for sending the military to recover oil tankers seized by striking captains. Bush Administration spokesman Ari Fleischer urged the Venezuelan government "to respect individual rights and fundamental freedoms."

But what would happen to people who hijacked an oil tanker from Exxon-Mobil in the United States? They would be facing a trial and a long prison sentence. Military officers who stood outside the White House and called for the overthrow of the government (and this just six months after a military coup supported by a foreign power) would end up in Guantanamo facing a secret military tribunal for terrorism.

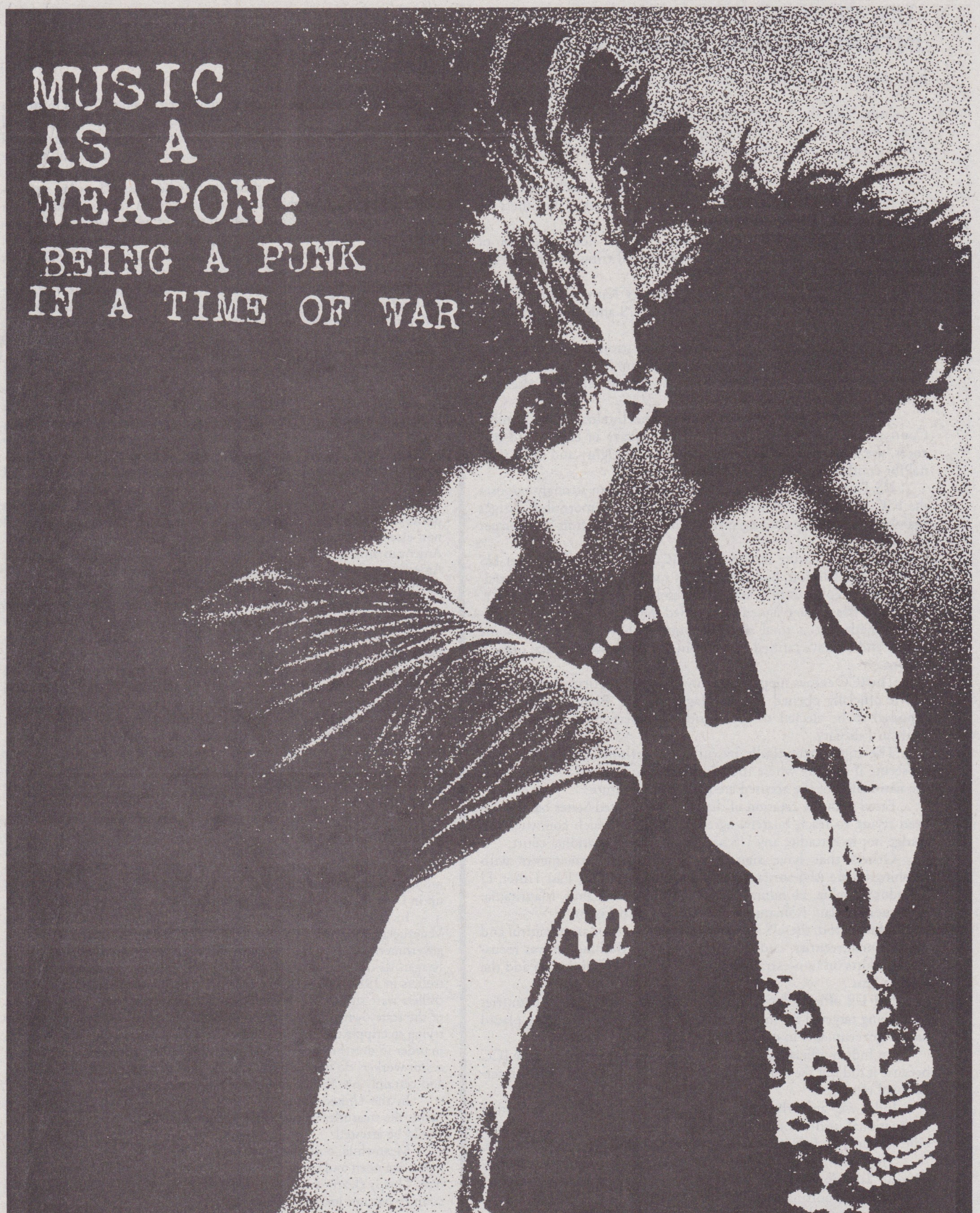
In fact, the US press would be much more fair if it held the Venezuelan government to the standards of the United States. In the US, government workers do not have the right to strike at all, as Ronald Reagan demonstrated when he summarily fired 12,000 air traffic controllers in 1981. But even this analogy is incomplete: the air traffic controllers were striking for better working conditions. Here, the employees of the state-owned oil company—mostly managers and executives—are trying to cripple the economy, which is heavily dependent on oil exports, in order to overthrow the government. In the United States, even private sector workers do not have the legal right to strike for political demands, and certainly not for the president's resignation.

In the United States, courts would issue injunctions against the strike, the treasuries of participating unions would be seized, and leaders would be arrested.

Meanwhile, outside of the wealthier areas of eastern Caracas, businesses are open and streets are crowded with shoppers. Life appears normal. This is clearly a national strike of the privileged, and most of the country has not joined it.

More than anything right now, this country needs dialogue and a ratcheting down of the tensions and hostilities between the two opposing camps, so as to avoid a civil war. But this dialogue will never happen if the United States continues to pursue a course of increasing confrontation.

Mark Weisbrot is Co-Director of the Center for Economic and Policy Research, in Washington D.C.


MUSIC
AS A
WEAPON:
BEING A PUNK
IN A TIME OF WAR

There's no monopoly on being righteous.

The artists who contributed their responses to this piece come from all sorts of places and definitions under the clumsy blanket of Punk. Some might fall outside of some readers' definitions of what's punk, what's DIY, what's underground.

There's an irony to this, in that *Maximum RocknRoll* for years has stood as one of the most obvious institutions drawing these lines publicly. While some people have criticized *MRR* for being pedantic or overly dogmatic, I can appreciate the value in keeping score. After all, if "the medium is the message," then logically there ought to be some niche of the earth reserved for those without even tenuous ties to The Machine, right?

The people I chose to poll are talented artists and critical thinkers-traits that transcend differances of opinion. While we might not all make the same decisions (exclusive distribution, chain stores, stagediving, haircuts and cheeseburgers?), it's nice to know we're all aiming our bottles in the right direction "when they kick in your front door."

In a time of war, it's crucial for us all to learn how to interact with people different than ourselves. I tend to think it's worth reflecting on our place as punks and how we might fit into the larger picture.

I owe *Maximum*, Arwen and Mike thanks for allowing me some freedom in this piece in good faith, and for printing it in the first place. I'd also like to thank all the contributors to this survey, especially Mark Andersen, Jenny Toomey, Ted Leo, and Allison Wolfe for their dedication and assistance and for (their chronological and consistent force) affecting the hearts of me and my friends.

We're responsible for our own days.

Mike McKee
Philadelphia
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JUSTIN SANE, ANTI-FLAG

Protest music has been a part of pop and rock music for an easy 50 years now—do you feel like much has changed?

•What we think has changed is the political reality of the United States. It seems that rather than progressive legislation and programs being implemented, now it is more the case of stopping really draconian measures from being implemented. We believe this is a direct result of the Democratic and Republican parties representing their real constituents—corporations.

As an artist, do you feel a responsibility to comment on current events?

•We absolutely feel a responsibility as artists to comment on current events. When people start thinking that they don't have a right and responsibility to comment, influence and participate in their government and society, we're in huge trouble as a democracy!

Is there significance to simply being visible in dissent against popular opinion?

•Being visible as a dissenter doesn't only ward off isolation, it helps others to find their own voice and gives them courage to stand as visible as dissenters themselves. There's something about being human that makes us want to fit in, be on the "winning" side, whatever.

What do you find distressing about the current political climate in the U.S.?

•Our country has rampant corporate crime and corruption that no one in government takes seriously because they're on the payroll of these same corporations. Our country has an undeclared war against the poor—millions of Americans have no health care, yet the U.S. is the richest country in the world. U. S. foreign policy is abysmal—our government goes around overthrowing and destabilizing democratically elected governments all over the world. Americans are surprised that people in other parts of the world hate us? Sometimes we wonder how it is that there are any people who don't! It's just inexcusable the degree to which people here don't give a fuck about anyone else anywhere else in the world.

If you felt strongly about something would you feel comfortable addressing it in your art?

•We use our music to inspire others and ourselves to transform our society into one that values people over profits. With that principle being the basis for what we do, it's hard for us to imagine how an issue that we care deeply about and want to raise awareness about wouldn't relate to our music.

What are the barriers between artist and audience that can obscure this kind of message?

•Not listening to or caring about the people who listen to your music and come to your shows is one thing that can totally get in the way of your message. No one likes to be preached at, and everyone has ideas and inspirations. A lot of those ideas come from the people who listen to your music.

Have you ever dealt with criticism or backlash in response to your lyrics or views, or the way in which you choose to operate?

•In punk rock, you are always dealing with criticism and backlash—some of it's justified, some of it isn't. Anyone can write safe music that doesn't challenge anyone. We try to stay focused on what the message is and how we can get that message out without compromising it.

PENNY RIMBAUD, CRASS COLLECTIVE
(Dial House, author, nee of CRASS, the band)

Protest music has been a part of pop and rock music for an easy 50 years now—do you feel like much has changed?

•With its roots in jazz and blues, which by its very nature was protest music, it is sad to note how pathetically little protest has found its way into what is the predominantly white world of pop and rock. Jazz and the blues was and is a way of life, whereas pop and rock have, from the outset, rarely been more than a profitable wing of bland consumer culture. The protest element within pop and rock has always been minimal and, where it has occurred, little more than nominal. The exceptions are rare enough to be counted on one hand.

In its 50-year existence, pop and rock have succeeded in doing no more than diluting and commodifying the righteous protest intrinsic within black culture from which it so shamelessly stole its inspiration—white cash for white trash.

As an artist, do you feel a responsibility to comment on current events?

•Because a true artist is unavoidably a part of current events, he or she cannot avoid commenting upon them. Those whose perceptions are false will portray and thereby promote falsity. Pop and rock are essentially a sham, a poor parody of black culture: a white, anglo-saxon, protestant pantomine promoting white, anglo-saxon, protestant ideals and the lies of capitalist democracy.

Pablo Picasso stated, "An artist is always at war with the world. Either he wants to conquer it or change it, change it or celebrate it." There are desperately few pop or rock "artists" who aspire to that standard, fewer still who live up to it.

Is there significance to simply being visible in dissent against popular opinion?

•By what criterion is popular opinion to be metered? A protest march in London of almost half a million people against American and Bush terrorization of Iraq was barely reported in the press (where it was a figure of 150,000 people was given). In which case, do the pens of hack journalism or the swords of half a million people represent popular opinion?

Mere visibility is clearly not enough to persuade those in power that the tide has turned against them. If they refuse to look at reason, they they must be forced to take heed of the consequences. Revolution is never more than a stone's throw away.

What do you find distressing about the current political climate in the U.S.?

•It would make more sense to ask what isn't distressing about the current political climate in America. Cry your tears, Walt Whitman, for the paper-thin mask of American democracy has finally been exposed. An unelected President waging a war that "won't end in our lifetimes" (which, of course rules out the 1000s that he and his kind will murder over that time) is cause enough to be distressed. The distress is intensified by the growing body of evidence which suggests that September 11 wasn't quite what Bush and his black-shirted cohorts would have us believe (he who smelt it dealt it). In his quest for global supremacy, it is clear that—clothes or no—this particular Emperor will stop at nothing. Oil runs thicker than blood.

It would do well for America to realize that, with simpering support from Britain's Prime Minister Blair, it is at war with itself, its greatest enemy lurking like a deadly ghoul behind the sacred, inviolate walls of the White House. Is it any great surprise then that that particular temple was not targeted also?

If you felt strongly about something would you feel comfortable addressing it in your art?

•Art cannot be divorced from politics. When it is, it is no longer art. An artist exists as an intrinsic part of the global politic, never apart from it. Those who do not express their concerns are moral cowards and are not worthy of the noble label of artist. "In their creativity, artists embody the proper relationship to the world."-Friedrich Nietzsche.

What are the barriers between artist and audience that can obscure this kind of message?

•Egocentricity, commercial greed, deceit and lies are the only barriers between artist and audience—the very same obscuration which has lead America to its self-inflicted holy war. The message is "get real, get a life, there is no authority but yourself." All else is cheap agendaism.

Have you ever dealt with criticism or backlash in result to your lyrics, your views or the way in which you choose to operate?

•The CIA inventions of our (Crass') intentions, Pentagon accusations of KGB involvement, KGB invitations to join forces, Mafia threats that our work "was not appreciated," M15 (British secret service) investigations, which left no letter unopened or phonecall untapped, IRA offers of support, internal memos passed around Thatcher's government warning of our activities, military and naval files logging our movements, court actions taken against us for blasphemy and obscenity, police intervention at gigs and against the sale of our records, police harassment on the street, accusations in the press that we were traitors or worse, outright ban on airplay on British radio, charts which were rigged to exclude us, almost total subsequent media whitewash of our historical existence... and the story remains untold.

Crass? I should say so.

ALLISON WOLFE, BRATMOBILE

Protest music has been a part of pop and rock music for an easy 50 years now. Do you feel like much has changed?

•I think governmental and corporate control over media, public opinion and the people in general is more consolidated and absolute compared to 30 years ago (Clear Channel, anyone?). This makes it harder for voices of dissent to be heard, especially since September 11.

As an artist, do you feel a responsibility to comment on current events?

•I find it hard to believe in just art for art's sake. I believe everyone can and should be creative, and I also believe in people's socio-political responsibility. We are up against so much conservative spin, if we do not shout out above the din of "United We Stand" or struggle to spit out the American flags shoved down our throats, then we'll all drown and choke in this conservative crap. If you're indeed "alternative", "independent", DIY, then speak out! People in bands are being watched, whether they like it or not.

What do you find distressing about the current political climate in the U.S.?

•Bush stole the election—it was proven in Florida, and no one seems to care! Jeb Bush and Katherine Harris hired some firm to come up with a list of supposed felons to disenroll from registered voter lists. Many on the list were accused of crimes to be committed in the future! The Bush administration took advantage of a massive U.S. tragedy (Sept. 11th) and the aftermath climate of fear, and used it to promote their right-wing, warrior domestic and foreign policies. They are banking on the fact that most Americans only care about American lives (and only certain ones, at that) and their own culture of affluence and convenience.

If you felt strongly about something would you feel comfortable addressing it with your music?

•If it's something you feel strongly about, it will come out in your art, your creative expression. Not everyone expresses dissent in the same way; it doesn't have to be "obvious" or sloganeering.

ERIN McCARLEY
DELTA DART

Is there significance to simply being visible in dissent against popular opinion?

•Totally—it is important for people to see that there is more than one or two ways of thinking about a situation. It's also important for visible dissent to be common, so that dissent doesn't become something that is looked upon as weird and unpatriotic.

If you felt strongly about something would you feel comfortable addressing it in your music?

•We do, and we do. Most people think of us as having more personal songs, but we all have really strong feelings about things that have been going on in the U.S and the world, and we try to bring those issues up in our live performances.

LANCE HAHN, J CHURCH (Honeybear Records)

As an artist, do you feel a responsiblity to comment on current events?

•Nobody has to listen to me and most people don't. As a result, I write about whatever I feel like and whatever is important to me, whether it's capitol-"P" politics, or personal stuff, or just a film I liked. Some people think that by not normally writing political songs, when we do write political oriented songs they have more impact.

But it's all just illusion. Not a day goes by that I don't think about the coming war, the economy and my hatred for the pigs.

What are some of the barriers that can obscure this sort of message?

•There are really only two real problems for songwriters to face. One is how to express yourself in a way that conveys that this is a broad political issue as well as something very personal to you, the writer. The other is to make sure you're not in any way talking down to people as there is a pretty good chance that many people listening to your records are smarter than you.

Do you feel there's significance to being visible in dissent against popular/mainstream opinion?

•It's crucial—propaganda by deed. I think making yourself visible in your activity, whether it's supporting DIY culture or burning down a church is really important. Just don't get caught!

Having said that I'm really opposed to "Dissent for the sake of dissent." I know that being the perennial rebel is a very romantic gesture. But that makes it a bourgeoise gesture. I have no interest in romanticizing political struggle. That's a total luxury that most people don't have.

Have you ever experienced a backlash or criticism from expressing your opinions as an artist? How do you deal with that?

•That's one of the benefits of being in a band like J Church as opposed to a hardcore band (nothing against hardcore bands, of course). People expect us to just be about girls and skateboards and comic books and that's all well and good. But we also like talking about the revolutionary martyrs like Jean Seberg, radical redistribution of the wealth and why the United States of America makes me wanna puke.

Most people that buy our records think it's a relief. They maybe like a lot of other emo and pop punk and whatever but feel like the lyrics are sort of beneath them. Not that we're super smart or anything. But I write like I talk and don't try to simplify anything for anyone.

Then there are those who wound up with some MP3s of our music while downloading Weezer and Blink 182 and, yeah, they like the pop genius of our music. But when they find out that we DON'T like sexism, homophobia, patriotism, the Pope, M2, they flip and decide they want to fight us. I've had threats from everyone from Frat Boys to skinheads to mall-rats. They all wanna kick my ass and some of them even want to kill me. I would guess we get that more than most of the obviously anarcho bands as Hot Topical Frat Boyardees don't accidentally find themselves at R.A.M.B.O. gigs.

Do you feel like underground music has a part to play in politics?

•It's not enough to be fighting the normals and corporate society. The counter-culture must equally be a true alternative and example of what exists outside of the norm. The cultural aspect is what needs to appeal to people. Once someone embraces that, it's easier to start unraveling the patriotic jive they've been told their whole life.

FAT BOB, HARD SKIN

As an artist, do you feel a responsiblity to comment on current events?

•What the fuck are you on about???

What are some of the barriers that can obscure this sort of message?

•Not getting enough beer inside you to be angry.

Do you feel there's significance to being visible in dissent against popular/mainstream opinion?

•I don't understand the question, Fruitcake. Next. Am I doing well so far?

"Protest music" has been with popular and genre music for well over 50 years. Do you feel like its presence has changed much?

•I protest about there not being enough birds, beer and darts in the world and I don't see many bands going about that. So I guess the answer is maybe.

Have you ever experienced a backlash or criticism from expressing your opinions as an artist? How do you deal with that?

•If someone disagrees, I put my size 12's up their jacksy!

Do you feel like underground music has a part to play in politics?

•They never play music on the underground tube system as far as I know. But, they are building a new link to Hackney—maybe they'll play music there.

NICOLE ENRIQUEZ, WITCH HUNT

As an artist, do you feel a responsiblity to comment on current events?

•In the post 9/11 world we live in, it would be quite impossible to write songs about human rights without touching on current issues.

Do you feel there's significance to being visible in dissent against popular/mainstream opinion?

•It is crucial underground music and art speak out against mainstream opinion. Most people are hearing their news coverage all from the same source. If it weren't for feminists such as Elizabeth Cady Stanton, bands like Born Against, and people like my parents, I would not have had the option to reject or accept either viewpoints.

What do you find most distressing about the political climate in the U.S?

•In the capitalist society we live in, our country's first priority is capital gain, rather than human welfare.

Do you feel like the pending escalation/war on Iraq is actually what most Americans want?

•Hell No.

TED RALL POLITICAL CARTOONIST

What are some of the barriers that can obscure a political sort of message?

•Artists who rely on subtlety and irony to convey their thoughts risk being misunderstood, but art shouldn't be created for people who don't get it. At the same time, artists should try to make their messages as clear as possible.

"Protest music" has been with popular and genre music for well over 50 years. Do you feel like its presence has changed much?

•I think it goes back a lot further than that. The big difference is that political music is far more marginalized than in the past. For instance, Bob Dylan and Phil Ochs enjoyed mainstream success that contemporary variants from Billy Bragg to punk bands do not. Nowadays it's considered cheesy or gauche to express yourself politically, but fuck that—people who feel that way are misguided or, at the very least, trying to compensate for their own apathy or sense of alienation.

Have you ever experienced a backlash or criticism from expressing your opinions as an artist? How do you deal with that?

•I receive death threats, hate mail, you name it. People add me to spam lists—the harrassment is endless. The government is tapping my phone, as well as that of my friends. Maybe it's because I'm so stubborn, but if anything those actions make me feel that I'm having a bigger impact. If you're bothering people enough to hate you, you're doing something right. It is, nonetheless, scary. For instance, I've had police officers call and leave their names and ranks on my voicemail with threats to shoot me. My caller ID verifies that the calls came from a police station. Who do I call—the cops? It makes you feel lonely. And when you're left of center politically in the United States, it's not like being on the right—there's no unity, no loyalty. Lefties don't stand up for each other. You wage battle alone. That's a big reason why the Right, who only represent a tiny percentage of the population, have so much power. If the Left ever got its shit together, it would be unstoppable.

Do you feel like underground music has a part to play in politics?

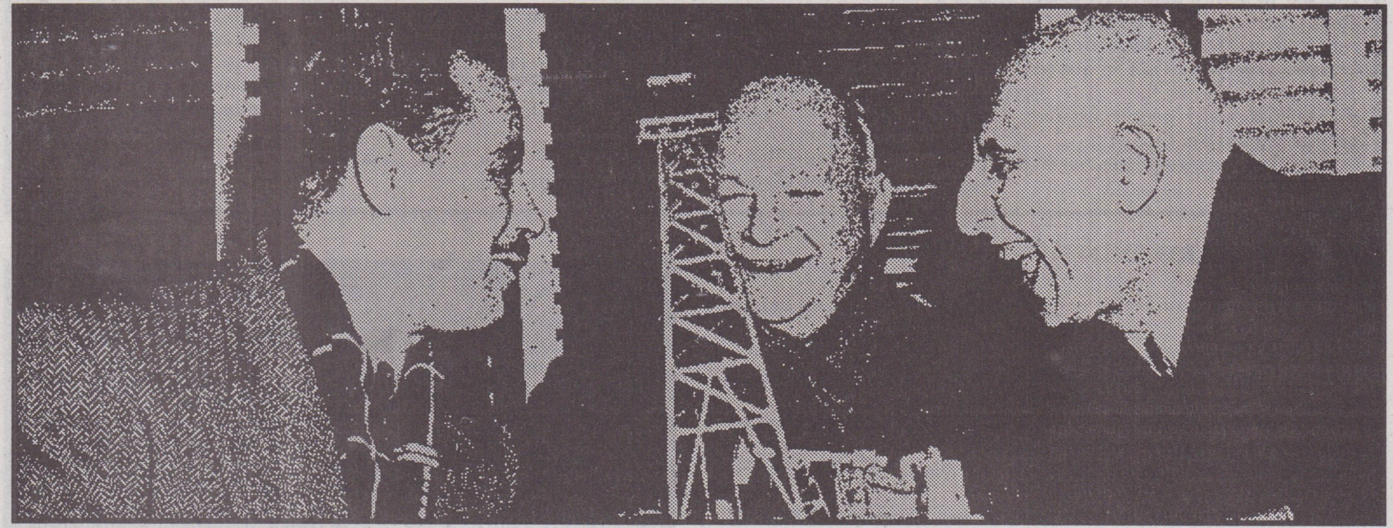
•Perhaps its most important role, given the fragmentation of music these days, is to make politically minded people feel sane. This is a vital role—otherwise total demoralization would set in.

If you felt strongly about something would you feel comfortable addressing it in your art?

•Anyone who doesn't use art to express strong feelings isn't an artist. They're a marketeer.

ALLEN HITCHENS
VIRGINIA BLACK LUNG

As an artist, do you feel a responsibility to comment on current events?
•Doing fliers, record layouts and playing in punk bands may not be high art (or art at all for that matter), but I would consider myself a failure if I didn't use my voice and my "art" to express my opinions on current events and other things I feel strongly about.
What are some of the barriers that can obscure this sort of message?
•Punk is not very accessible. My audience is inherently limited to people already drawn to punk for the most part. Though there have been exceptions.
Do you feel there's significance to being visible in dissent against popular/mainstream opinion?
•Yes. or FUCK YES!!! It's been my experience that popular opinion is very open to change. It seems to change quickly and I believe that presenting people with contrary information helps that change.
Have you ever experienced a backlash or criticism from expressing your opinions as an artist? How do you deal with that?
•Just complaints from people who don't want to be challenged in their lives. Fuck 'em.
What do you find most distressing about the political climate in the U.S?
•Apathy. The fact that I encounter so many people, even people who are supposedly part of some counter culture, who don't care about what's going on around them.
Do you feel like underground music has a part to play in politics?
•Education. Plain and simple. Punk started me on the road that I have gone down. I hope that I can do something to spark an interest in politics in someome.
Do you feel like the pending escalation/war on Iraq is actually what most Americans want?
•I feel that most Americans are ambivalent to the whole thing. It seems that people see war as just another part of their prime time programming. It's hard to get worked up about these things when you are worried about feeding your kids and how you're going to pay rent. And since most people seem to be losing the game of achieving the Amerikkkan dream, worrying about people half way around the world seems a lot less important. Though I will say in most conversations that I have people seem to think what the U.S. government is doing they are doing for reasons other than the ones they have stated.



JOHN YATES
STEALWORKS GRAPHICS

What are some of the barriers that can obscure a political or artistic message?
•A lack of belief in one's self and one's ability to effect change, no matter on what level. If you feel you can't possibly make a difference, then you can't possibly make a difference.
Have you ever experienced a backlash or criticism from expressing your opinions as an artist? How do you deal with that?
•I have. But I don't have to deal with that. Those who take issue have to deal with that.
Do you feel like underground music has a part to play in politics?
•Yes. But it isn't playing up to that role. It's too busy selling cars and sneakers.
Do you feel like the pending escalation/war on Iraq is actually what most Americans want?
•No. But since when has that mattered? Most Americans didn't want George Bush for president.
If you felt strongly about something would you feel comfortable addressing it in your art?

JOS
SEEIN' RED

As an artist, do you feel a responsiblity to comment on current events?
•We have chosen to use our music as a vehicle to voice our opinion on matters that either distress us, occupy our minds or piss us off. Even in our so called liberal country we have witnessed a massive move to the right and populists have gained a lot of power that way. Right now it is almost common to talk about Muslims in general as potential Bin Laden supporters and links in his network. Therefore, the climate has changed a lot.
What are some of the barriers that can obscure this sort of message?
•The biggest barrier might be that our music is pretty much limited to a small audience. I think that we do not reach a lot of outsiders.
"Protest music" has been with popular and genre music for well over 50 years. Do you feel like its presence has changed much?
•Protest music is obviously still present, but I honestly doubt that punk as a form of protest music is a form to change the world. Like I said before, it is just too loud and too hard to get into for a lot of people. I believe that music can be a weapon, but let's not think that music can change the world.
Have you ever experienced a backlash or criticism from expressing your opinions as an artist? How do you deal with that?
•We have had so many discussions during and after shows in our existence that I could write a book about that. This alone proves that saying things in between songs actually makes people start to think.
What do you find most distressing about the political climate in the U.S?
•What really shocked me was the all over nationalism I witnessed in the DC/Maryland area last month. I was informed that it was even worse last year. On the other hand, I have talked to a lot of people over there and it seems to be that opposition towards Bush is growing and that is a good sign. I get sick of the 'innocent' part the American leaders are playing, condemning a country like Iraq for creating mass destruction weapons, whilst so far the USA has been the only country using an atom bomb ever.
Do you feel like underground music has a part to play in politics?
•I would like to see it reversed, politics have to play a part in underground music.
Do you feel like the pending escalation/war on Iraq is actually what most Americans want?
•Hard to answer, because we get our information either from television or alternative media. like i said before, it seems to be that the opposition is growing and that is a good sign.

MARK ANDERSEN, POSITIVE FORCE D.C.

Protest music has been a part of pop and rock music for an easy 50 years now—do you feel like much has changed?
I don't protest necessarily expecting things to change for the better. I protest because I feel something is wrong. I don't expect songs to change the world. People change the world, although songs or other art can (and, in my case, do) give people strength for that struggle.
As an artist, do you feel a responsibility to comment on current events?
•Artists are people, and I believe all people have a responsibility to respond to the challenges of their day, especially the main on-going challenge, which is to look out for each other, to care for each other. The more power you have, the more responsibility you also carry.
If you felt strongly about something would you feel comfortable addressing it in your art?
•Art, for me, rises from life, from a passionate search for meaning, for truth, however cloudy or confused. As for those who say politics and art don't mix, I think you might as well say life and art don't mix. There is plenty of hokey trash out there masquerading as profound social comment, I don't deny it. But that is just a failure of the artist. We can certainly find ways to take a stand without compromising our art!
What are the barriers between artist and audience that can obscure this kind of message?
•The greatest expression of our art is living truly and well. We all have some power, so we all have some responsibility. I know that artist/audience barriers exist, but I don't acknowledge and thus, don't empower them. Certainly, waiting around for Ian MacKaye, or anyone else, to say what you think needs to be said is bogus. Speak your own mind, live your own life —life is short, better kick ass, compassionately, of course!

TED LEO, THE PHARMACISTS (nee of Chisel, Spinanes, Citizen's Arrest)

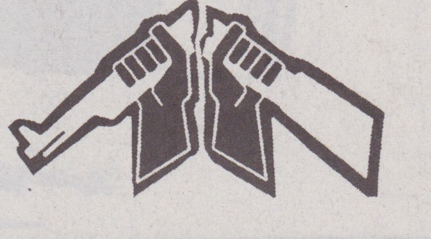
Protest music has been a part of pop and rock music for an easy 50 years now—do you feel like much has changed?
•We like to think that in the '60s and '70s, the above ground artists accepted by the establishment were all singing protest songs, but were they really? I think that then, as now, you had a few outspoken mainstream artists making protest music. Those who really spoke out seem to have been, by and large, again as today, the more underground types.
As an artist, do you feel a responsibility to comment on current events?
•I do feel a responsibility to comment on current events in my music, but it's a personal thing. I don't dismiss "art for art's sake." I usually appreciate it, but I don't generally make it. I feel a vocation to be an artist like those who've influenced me and stirred my heart to feeling, thought and action.
What are the barriers between artist and audience that can obscure this kind of message?
•Some of the barriers are also the conduits. Music and imagery—art—is an indirect way to impart a message. At the same time, it can carry it so much deeper into an audience. Dangers can arise when the artist becomes more of the focus than the art or the message and being visible becomes an end instead of a means. I think that sometimes the large personalities of artists can discourage the audience—people get discouraged or lulled into thinking that their place is perpetually in the audience. Also, sometimes simply buying the record and wearing the t-shirt is presented as being enough when actually the money spent on those types of things is going straight back into the "machine" you thought you were "raging" against.
Have you ever dealt with criticism or backlash in result to your lyrics, your views or the way in which you choose to operate?
•I have, but not often. Being still in the underground, whatever the problem is is usually talked out face to face. I come from the world of '80s punk and hardcore, and I try to carry that ethic with me. People understand that, and most of the people that I associate with are at least sympathetic to that ethic themselves.

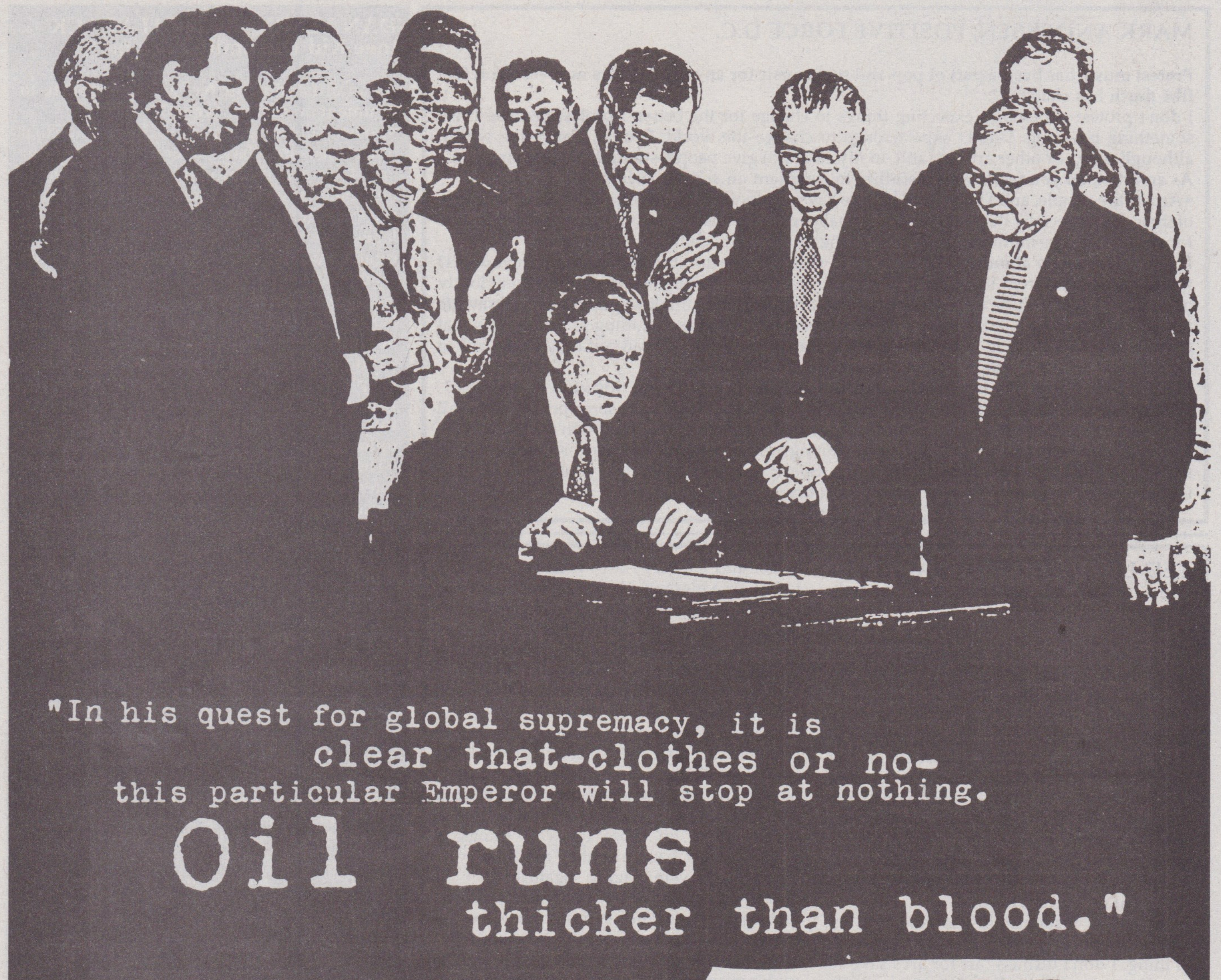
DAN YEMIN, PAINT IT BLACK (nee Kid Dynamite/Lifetime)

As an artist, do you feel a responsibility to comment on current events?
•I personally do, although I acknowledge that other artists may have other agendas for their art. I see a two-fold obligation: 1) To reflect our material and emotional experiences and preoccupations in our work. 2) To take advantage of the visibility and the potential for visceral impact that artists often have to stimulate thought/feeling/dialogue about things that we think are important.
What are some of the barriers that can obscure this sort of message?
•Unfortunately, politics aren't sexy right now. People want party music, not protest music.
Do you feel there's significance to being visible in dissent against popular/mainstream opinion?
•The greater the visibility of opposition, the safer it feels for individuals to raise their own voices in protest. Also, I think that visibility of dissent inspires people. But access to visibility gets more difficult as more and more media outlets are owned by fewer entities, whose agendas are reflected in what gets ignored on the front page or the TV news.
"Protest music" has been with popular and genre music for well over 50 years. Do you feel like its presence has changed much?
•I'm not sure it's really evolved as much as we'd like to think. Look at the "punk" music that enjoys mainstream visibility today. It's about as threatening to existing power structures as tootsie pops and bunnies.
Have you ever experienced a backlash or criticism from expressing your opinions as an artist? How do you deal with that?
•I've even experienced it from my own band members. No matter what the source of the criticism is, my answer is "fuck you."
What do you find most distressing about the political climate in the U.S?
•First of all: Republicans in general (voting for tax breaks over moral/ethical concerns is just plain wack).
Second: the lack of what I would consider a viable left-of-center agenda in the two-party political arena.
Third: ELECTION THEFT!
Fourth: Apologists for corporate crime.

JENNY TOOMEY FUTURE OF MUSIC COALITION (nee of Simple Machines, Tsunami)

As an artist, do you feel a responsibility to comment on current events?
•I do, but responsibility is not the word—maybe compulsion. I probably spend more time doing activism than doing music. So, in many ways, I work through a lot of that in places that are not music. Aesthetically this makes more sense to me than singing anthems. Simple Machines was known for being a political label without the punk aesthetic. We eschewed the arm band and the Xerox cover sleeves and ran in the other direction. I knew too much about "revolution" from my work as an activist to be able to use it as a metaphor or to use it lightly. It seemed ingenuine to push to the front of a crowd with fist in air knowing 9/10ths of the audience would all be getting rides in minivans back to the suburbs. It seemed like play acting or confusing the gesture with the ideal.
Have you ever dealt with criticism or backlash in result to your lyrics or your views?
•At Ladyfest Los Angeles, I tried to raise the question of the war. I stood on stage and asked the smattering of an audience, "Have a lot of the other ladies been talking about the fact that we are about to go to war?" I was met with a humid silence. I limped forward trying to make connections between war and feminism, and eventually abandoned politics and returned to performing songs.
We live in such an anti-political cynical climate that everyone is terrified to take a stand that might make them seem stupid.
Is there significance to simply being visible in dissent against popular opinion?
I had a conversation with another musician recently and asked him which musicians he respected. He said none of them because none of them were talking about the war. The minute he said that, it changed my measure of a respectable musician, which is strange considering the strong political beliefs of so many of the musicians who first drew me to music—how much the climate has changed and how little I'd noticed. I feel like a frog boiling in a pot that never noticed the water getting warmer.

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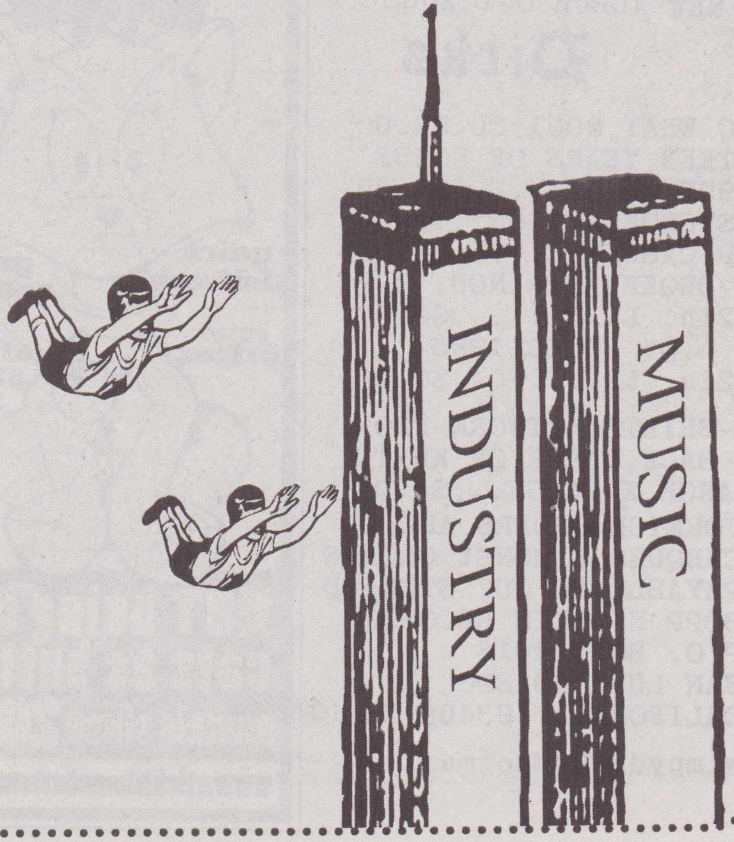

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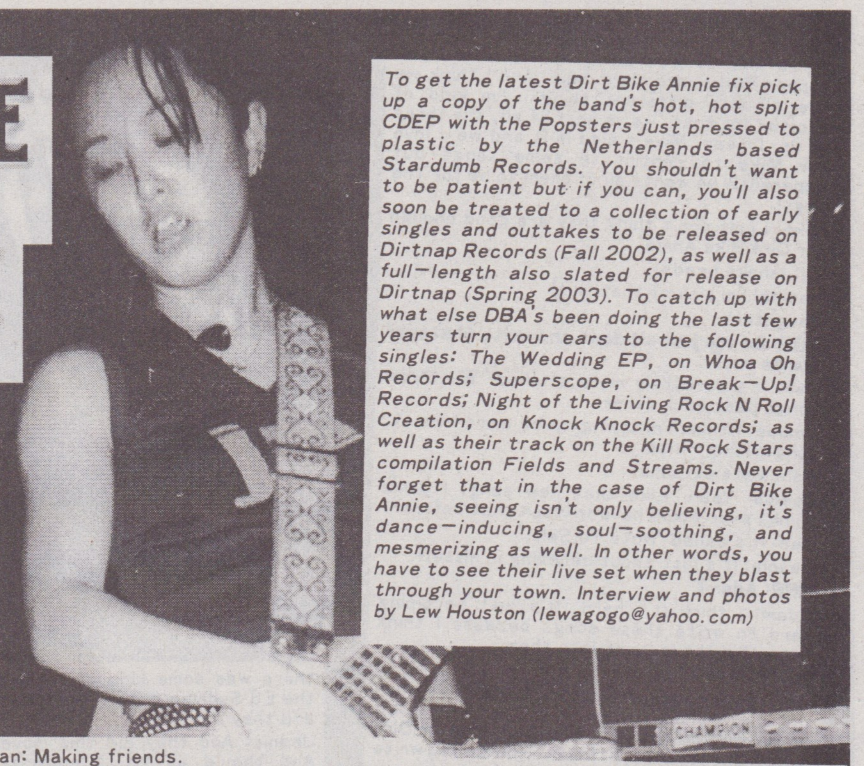

To get the latest Dirt Bike Annie fix pick up a copy of the band's hot, hot split CDEP with the Popsters just pressed to plastic by the Netherlands based Stardumb Records. You shouldn't want to be patient but if you can, you'll also soon be treated to a collection of early singles and outtakes to be released on Dirtnap Records (Fall 2002), as well as a full-length also slated for release on Dirtnap (Spring 2003). To catch up with what else DBA's been doing the last few years turn your ears to the following singles: The Wedding EP, on Whoa Oh Records; Superscope, on Break-Up! Records; Night of the Living Rock N Roll Creation, on Knock Knock Records; as well as their track on the Kill Rock Stars compilation Fields and Streams. Never forget that in the case of Dirt Bike Annie, seeing isn't only believing, it's dance-inducing, soul-soothing, and mesmerizing as well. In other words, you have to see their live set when they blast through your town. Interview and photos by Lew Houston (lewagogo@yahoo.com)

MRR: What do you love about rock and roll?

Mike: I get this warm, fuzzy feeling inside of me when I hear a great song and that's what I love about rock and roll. Dirt Bike Annie gave me that warm, fuzzy feeling when I first plopped "Letters and Numbers" right onto that record player (Note: Off the band's *Choco-Berri Sugar Pops* single on Mutant Pop Records, which Mike did not drum on).

Dan: I can always expound and extrapolate. Frankly, I love the rush. Every once in a while you get, it's not a chill, it's like a current of electricity and it's running up and down you, it's a tingly feeling...because it's you up there. I went to school for theater and the difference is, when you're in theater what gives you the rush is when someone utterly believes you are in this situation and you are feeling these emotions, but it's not you, it's a character. When it's a rock and roll moment, someone's singing and rocking to you and your lyrics and it's a really good feeling. It's a rush, like an adrenaline rush.

Mike: It's like as soon as you counted off "Argument" tonight, and the whole crowd bounced up and down the whole time. Well, at least until the second verse (laughter).

Dan: And then they petered off.

Jeanie: I think it's because we stopped doing it.

Adam/Jeanie: Monkey see monkey do!

Dan: I can't really hop up and down while I'm singing. I can maybe bend my knees.

MRR: Adam, what do you love about rock and roll?

Adam: I question it myself sometimes. I'm like, "Why the fuck am I doing this?". There's self doubt in there and it's not just a simple answer, it's love/hate.

Jeanie: That's a real answer.

MRR: Jeanie, what about you?

Jeanie: What everyone said, the rush of it. It's so different from everything else I do during the day. It's just exciting, that's all.

Dan: It's kind of the opposite of sitting at a desk staring at a screen.

MRR: What's it like to be a part of the underground? That's kind of where you came from and it's kind of a unique thing New York's got going on. It's kind of small but...

Dan: I think you saw it at its best tonight. All the bands we know, everyone sounds good. You're like "yeah I want to do another show with these bands". That's really fun when you get to that. It's great when not every band sucks.

MRR: I guess it seems that the pop underground was kind of important when you started out. You kind of fell into that scene.

Dan: Yeah, definitely. Mutant Pop Fest, October '99, in Columbus, Ohio was a defining moment.

Jeanie: Having had that opportunity keeps things in perspective. I watched the Dirt Bike Annie tour video the other night and I was like, "Man that is what it's all about".

Dan: Making friends.

Jeanie: No matter where this goes eventually, that's always what it will be about; making music, making friends. I think having that experience totally keeps things in perspective, as opposed to starting a band and one day having the fame or whatever.

MRR: If there were a slogan for Dirt Bike Annie, a way of defining the band in a few words, what would it be?

Dan: I think we're fun, party rock music.

Mike: It's definitely the fun.

MRR: Dirt Bike Annie had quite the party reputation. You used to get naked a lot back in the day. That's what I knew of you before I saw you guys for the first time. Dirt Bike Annie gets naked and does all kinds of fun, crazy shit.

Dan: That's good that our reputation precedes us.

MRR: That has kind of chilled out lately, hasn't it?

Mike: There's nudity all over the tour video.

Adam: Oh yeah, that was just goofing around. Everybody gets naked.

MRR: Everybody does?

Dan: Come on, who doesn't want to go skinny dip in a pool? There's nothing wrong with skinny dipping.

Mike: Brandon Dung...

Adam: In Brandon Dung's grandma's pool, there's nothing wrong with that! (laughter)

Dan: Just let me tell you, often the getting naked is combined with the partying and the drunkenness. What's key to know is we don't drink before we play, because we learned that makes for a really bad performance. We're not really going to get naked on the stage, because we're not drunk.

MRR: Which Dirt Bike Annie record are you fondest of and why?

All: The Wedding EP.

Jeanie: That record helped us as a band.

Dan: The process.

Jeanie: Creatively.

Dan: The first song was supposed to be a cover, like the electronic pop one.

Adam: No, it was supposed to be an old song redone.

Dan: Right, so I'd insisted we cover this song, which was the first song Jeanie had ever recorded, it was a straight up pop-punk song. And we recorded the song like pop-punk and...

Jeanie: I hated it.

Dan: Jeanie couldn't sing it, she refused to sing it. She was like, "I won't do it, I hate it." We were like "Ok, well we have to do this, we're not going to get Mike back in here and redo it." We just whipped out the drum machine and had fun with it, it was really creative. It was great to work with the Kung Fu Monkeys (Note: The Wedding EP was a two record split with them), because they are really fun. It meant something because Chad and Jessa (co-owners of She's Gone Records whom The Wedding EP was dedicated to) are good friends of ours. Chadd and Jonnie Whoa Oh (Note: Co-owners of Whoa Oh Records), who put out the record, are also great friends of ours. It just had a lot of good feelings around it, and I think we liked the songs too.

MRR: No special fondness for any other recording?

Mike: I don't know, "Hit The Rock" has a special place in my heart because that was *the* record. That was the record of my summer of 1999. June 1st I got that record in the mail, and that was the start of it. But records I've been on? Yeah, The Wedding EP, that was really fun to do. And I'm on it twice (Note: Mike plays drums with the Kung Fu Monkeys as well).

Adam: Because even the cover songs, we kind of made them our own. It was really fun.

MRR: Where's Dirt Bike Annie going now, what are you working on at the current moment?

Adam: We're trying to make a new record, I think that's the plan. So we're trying to get that written, it's about half way written.

Dan: We're trying to come at it very equally and we're all bringing more of ourselves to the table. Like individual songs, we're not trying to really conform to what Dirt Bike Annie was or anything.

We're kind of just going with whatever we happen to be into right now. And I think we are all into different things. I'm kind of excited for that, we've sort of all, the three of us. I mean, Mike's also in it and we'd love for Mike to contribute some songs but apparently he wants all of them to be for The Ergs!

Mike: I just don't think they are good enough for Dirt Bike Annie.

All: (shake heads)

Jeanie: I'm sick of that shit!

(laughter)

MRR: Do you just sit down and write whatever comes out?

Dan: It's definitely more studied. We throw songs past each other.

Jeanie: I think I'm trying to be more honest, songwriting—wise.

Dan: More personal.

Jeanie: Yeah. Like that new song, I don't think I ever would have written that before.

Dan: It's called "Note To Self."

Jeanie: It's just about believing in myself.

MRR: Adam?

Adam: I think it's hard. It's just becoming hard to write these songs because I think more thought is going into them.

MRR: Do you feel pressured?

Adam: Not really, it's weird. Lately I've been doing exercises in free writing with Dan. It's so easy to do that but then to write for Dirt Bike Annie is really difficult. How do you write a song? I can't explain that.

Dan: It's difficult to somehow stay true to what you were and also keep moving forward.

Adam: I feel like the changes are pretty good and they seem to happen pretty naturally. So, we don't really have to think about the changes, they just sort of happen.

Mike: Or when you try and think about it, it doesn't really get done.

Dan: We're trying to find our own voice that's somehow emotionally honest and yet still fun and rocking. Something that's not quite pop—punk, it's not emo, it's not any of those things. It's us.

MRR: You make the music you want to make...

Adam: It's really hard to be completely honest with yourself, is what I find. And that's ultimately what we're trying to do because of what Dan just said, which sounds kind of on the money. God! Rewind over all my parts, I can't be in this interview. I used to read Maximumrocknroll, and I was like, "Oh it's so cool, look at all these record reviews, all these bands I never heard of!". This is supposed to go in there? Oh my god. I sound like an asshole. And we're going to get made fun of(laughter). I'm just being honest.

MRR: So Dirt Bike Annie are well known for their live show. At what point did you amp up the live show...when did you decide that needed to be done or is it just something that happened?

Jeanie: I don't think we felt like we had to, it kind of happened...

Dan: It was a creative decision. Jeanie came up with it.(laughter)

Dan: That's the truth. We were talking about it the other day. Jeanie didn't make us do it. There was this one show, our first really good show was at The Spiral.

Jeanie: Oh yeah, that show was awesome.

Dan: The Spiral no longer exists, it's for sale. It was our first time there and we watched the video over and over again because we thought we were really good at that show and we had synchronized jumps. We all jumped at the same time and we were like. "WOW! That is so cool! Did you see how we did that? We all did it at the same time!".

Jeanie: (laughing) We're such dorks! It came out of being dorks, naturally.

Dan: That was sort of the first clue. And there was one time when me and Jeanie and Joe (Jeanie's husband) were hanging out where Joe works, at this editing house, and there was some kind of retrospective of the Ed Sullivan show. There was this band and they did this song, "Do the Freddie".

Jeanie: And they did this move like this. And they'd all go...(Demonstrating the Freddie, sort of).

Dan: He was doing jumping jacks, and the lead singer was a fucking freak.

Jeanie: It was great.

Dan: And it was just so funny.

MRR: So you guys are really just doing the Freddie?

Jeanie: We stole it. We're stealers!

MRR: Do you enjoy the sets more now?

Jeanie: It's more fun.

Dan: It's our visual hook.

MRR: What have you been listening to lately, what's on the turntable?

Jeanie & Adam: Cherubino.

Dan: The new album "Bird," on Self—Starter Foundation. They're from Brooklyn. I would say Cherubino for me personally is instrumental in the new phase of songwriting.

Jeanie: I agree with that.

Dan: Because they're a really cool, fun, Indie—pop band. You couldn't quite put your finger on what they were doing, and it was really cool and still poppy.

Jeanie: With a little bit of an 80's influence.

Dan: Yeah, it was really neat. They had keyboard breakdowns, he'd turn around and do this whole keyboard thing. They had this cute little chick drummer who could actually play really well.

Adam: Andrew WK is on the fucking turntable man, Whew! "Party Hardy", "Party till you puke!".

Dan: I'm listening to Queens of the Stone Age.

Mike: The Plus Ones, Dead Milkmen.

Adam: I used to be in a Dead Milkmen cover band. We covered five songs off *Big Lizard* alone. "Nutrition", "Dean's Dream", "Beach Song", almost all Dead Milkmen covers with 4 originals.

Dan: That was Adam's first band.

Jeanie: I have to go home soon.

MRR: And what are you going to do when you go home?

Jeanie: I'm gonna jerk it, and then go to sleep(laughter). Just kidding. Just kidding.

Mike: I jerk it.

Adam: I watch medical operations on TV before bed.

MRR: When you're sitting on the porch of the retirement home and you're looking back on your younger years, Dirt Bike Annie will obviously be a huge part of those memories, right?

Dan: Yeah, hell yeah. When we're old we're going look back on this and it's going to be an important part of our lives.

Adam: It's been like ten years for me so far, and that's almost a third of my life. How can I deny that, you know? It's a part of me.

MRR: How much does Dirt Bike Annie define who you are?

Dan: There was this health insurance survey for musicians and it said, "how much time do you spend on band stuff?".

Jeanie: What did you put?

Dan: I put 50%.

Jeanie: I put 80%.

Adam: I put 80%. Dude, you gotta try harder man! You are not applying yourself! (laughter)

Dan: So there you go, there's your answer. It's 80% of our lives, or whatever. At least half.

Adam: I was thinking, "alright I'm at work for eight hours, but really at work I'm working on band stuff all day".

MRR: And Mike?

Mike: 95%.

Jeanie: What's the other five?

Mike: Sleeping, chicken and jerking it. (laughter and hand gestures)

MRR: Any comments?

All: We're going to give some shout outs to: The Tattle Tales, The Unlovables, The Ergs!, Timbo, Egghead, the Kung Fu Monkeys, Mike Faloon, Shy Guys, Jonnie Whoa Oh, Mark Enoch, Grand Prixx, The Lynnwoods, Eddie Prom, Nate Prom, The Proms, Connie Dungs aka A Radio With Guts, Cherubino, The Seconds, Quick Fix, Uncle Joe's...Vinyl—A—Go Go, Now Wave Magazine.

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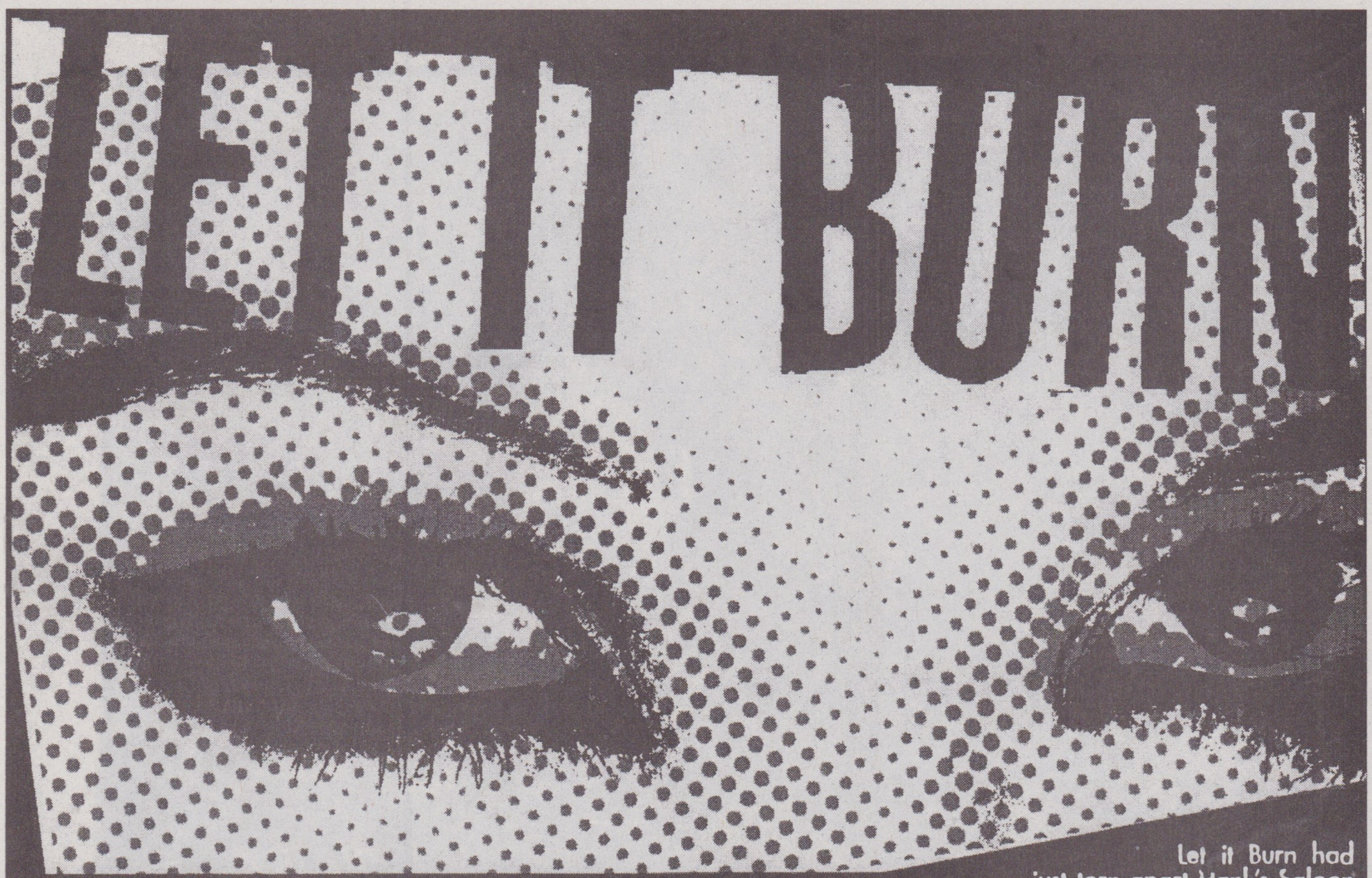

Let it Burn had just torn apart Hank's Saloon in Brooklyn, with a set that just fell short of the half hour mark, when I met up with them for a long overdue interview. The crowd was not entirely their own, but all eyes had been on them for packing an hour of pure energy into twenty-eight minutes, very efficient indeed. As we walked in the rain to their roomy tour van for the interview, a homeless man complete with notebook and documents begged for money, swearing it was for charity. He apparently had the one to three am canvassing shift. Now, safe in the comfort of the van, I reflected on how well constructed his scam was. Arrogant as they may be, Let it Burn's essence is not the well-constructed scam that much popular music perpetrates on today's audiences. They shoot from the hip, say what they want, and more often than not, take the road less traveled. This attitude is reflected in their music, in their live shows and in their personal attitudes. Some bands dress and act as though they are constantly conscious of the "I don't care" attitude they are insinuating. The fact of the matter is that Let it Burn actually don't care. They don't care what you think of them, they don't care if the show sucks, and they don't care if their music goes over well. They talked to me for almost an hour about heartache, a recent tour of Europe and how much they care about their integrity in their own eyes. Oh yeah, and Brooklyn's best pizza too.

Interview by Kris Walter Photos by Patrick Baclet

Let it burn is Chris-guitar, Will- bass, D.J.- vocals, Pete- drums

MRR: So, how was Europe?

Will: Europe was a great fucking time, had a lot of fun. Met a lot of cool people. Had a great fucking driver, named Kelly; he could drive his ass off. Good German roadie named Olli. Had a lot of great shows, had some bad shows as well.

Chris: Overall the tour went really well. It ended on a really good note.

DJ: As far as the tour goes, there were some problems with the booking, so we had six days off in thirty days, which is kind of rough. I think that's the type of thing that could take the morale of the entire band down. It's the kind of thing that you hear about that can break bands up. But in actuality, we all got back and we're still kind of in tour mode. I think I can speak for all of us when I say that those five weeks were just about the best five weeks of our lives. In the end, we became better friends than we were, and despite the logistical problems of the tour, we made the best of it. I think the fact that the tour didn't go as smoothly as we'd planned, forced us to become closer as a band.

Will: Totally, musically, and as friends.

DJ: Yeah, when we did actually end up playing, we were so on. We met so many good people throughout those five weeks, that even the days off were nothing but fun. So, we made it work.

MRR: What are the differences you see between European audiences and specifically, the tri-state audiences that you play to often?

Will: I'd say it depends upon what country we were in. Germany, I'd say had a lot of hostility, maybe towards Americans, I'm not sure.

Chris: Well, that was really an isolated instance, Will. Remember that towards the end the tour we played some shows there and had kids following us from the first shows in Germany; driving four hours to see us, when they'd already seen us three times.

Will: That's true. Germany was pretty cool. Sweden and Switzerland were cool too. Good times and a lot of really good shows.

DJ: As far as differences in audiences goes, I don't know if there were any distinct differences. I mean, it was just like any other tour where there were some nights the crowd would stare at you with expressionless faces, and then at the end of the night, people would come up and compliment you, despite their lack of energy. Other nights, there would be kids jumping off the speakers and hanging from the ceiling. It was like any other tour where it was hit or miss as far as crowd reactions went. I don't think there were any noticeable differences in crowds.

MRR: Well, one of the obvious differences would be that you're playing to audiences who may or may not understand all of your lyrics. Obviously, seeing a band for the first time live, lyrics aren't always distinguishable, but for those who own your records and have the chance to read them over, do you think that the language barrier plays a part in any difference?

DJ: I think to some extent. Some countries for example, when you get to the east of Germany or even to some of Eastern Europe, it's not a common thing for audiences to speak or even understand the English language. Whereas in places like Holland or Sweden, you could barely tell that English isn't their primary language. I mean, I've been known to make jokes or just say ridiculous things in between songs, and occasionally you just get blank stares in return. It's uncom-

Marshall

fortable, but you have to keep in mind that no one understands a word I'm saying. That being said, I guess there is a difference for us, because I think that our stage presence is such that we like to interact with the crowd and talk to people. It's difficult to do that in some of the eastern European countries. In Hungary, for instance, I don't think anyone knew what I was saying the entire time.

MRR: When and why did Let it Burn become a band?

DJ: I don't think there was a distinct idea behind the band when we first got together.

Will: I think it was because we had played together in previous bands. We knew each other and wanted to continue playing with each other.

MRR: So are you saying that Let it Burn was just a continuation of what you were doing with Full Speed Ahead?

DJ: The three of us played in another band, it doesn't matter what the name of it was, but I think that we wanted to do something different. We didn't know what that was at the time, but we knew we wanted to do something different. I think at the time that we became a band, and even now, there were a lot of old school/early eighties style hardcore bands around. Some were really good and some were really bad, but they are like anything else that repeats itself. We'd already done that and we knew we wanted to do something else. There was no specific idea around Let it Burn but the vague idea was that we'd start a band where we can do what we want, when we want, and we're not tied down to one set genre.

Will: We've talked this through, about how we don't want to get stuck in a certain style.

DJ: We've all been in bands where you get stuck in what you can accomplish musically. I think that if we wanted to write something completely different, we could. You look at our two records and I think you can see a difference. They're similar in the sense that there is no distinct style going on throughout them.

Chris: Well, other people have said they think that we do have a style, but I don't know if it's totally consistent.

DJ: Yeah, maybe we do have a style, but I think that it could go a few different ways. I've always said I don't want to write the same record twice because there's no point in it. I just want to be open enough to do whatever.

MRR: So after deciding not to be like everyone else, where did you go? What was the progression from *This is the Sound* to *Here's to Goodbyes*? What direction were you trying to move in?

DJ: I think that *This is the Sound* is much more of a punk record. It's a different sounding punk record than most, but it's a punk record just the same. I think that with *Here's to Goodbyes*, we wanted to make a punk record in essence, but we wanted to branch out a bit more. We wanted to do some different things, nothing crazy or anything.

MRR: Be specific. What direction were you going in? *This is the Sound* was a straight punk record. There's an Elton John cover on *Here's to Goodbyes*, for shit's sake.

Will: Well, we were definitely going for something different; we were trying for different things in the studio, but we didn't have the funds to do it. We wanted to put more things in, but time was a factor.

DJ: Well, we're a punk band in essence, and we always will be. I think that even if we put out an acoustic record, it'd be punk in spirit. But, on *Here's to Goodbyes*, we tried to go for a more rock and roll sound. I mean rock and roll is a really vague distinction, but we wanted more of a rock feel than just a straight up punk record.

MRR: That being said, there's been such a big revival with that sort of thing; with bands like the Hives and the White Stripes playing sort of a throwback to garage rock. Does Let it Burn fit into that whole classification?

DJ: I don't know if we do. I mean I'd be lying if I said there wasn't a heavy garage rock influence on *Here's to Goodbyes* but we weren't going for as specific a retro sound as those bands were. I think we were trying to make a hybrid of all the music that influences us and has influenced our lives. Everything from garage rock bands like the Stooges, to punk bands like Seven Seconds, to seventies rock bands like Elton John. So, I think that what we were trying to do was move away from making a punk record like *This is the Sound* and incorporate a lot of the non-punk influences that we all have. For the most part, I'd say we did a pretty good job accomplishing that, despite the time and money limitations.

Pete: We've been in bands that were so stuck in the past.

DJ: Yeah, I think that we've all been in bands that were nailed down to being just punk, or just hardcore, but we've been influenced by so much more than just those genres. I think this was the first time for us that we've been able to try to incorporate those sounds.

MRR Did your producer, Otto Von Crimelord have anything to do with that?

DJ: Well, the thing about him.

Will: The thing about that guy is, he's fired.

DJ: He showed up to the studio and he brought this guy with him, Rufus T. West. They had good ideas, but we couldn't afford them, so they left before the actual mixing of the record was done.

Will: They beat up Chris. I mean they really fucked him up.

DJ: It was in their contract that their names had to be on the record, even though they didn't actually produce it. All they did was promise to bring drugs and hookers, but they didn't do either.

Will: Well, they brought some drugs, but I did them all and I didn't tell these guys, so I guess they did produce the record, kind of.

DJ: No, I knew. They actually brought cocaine. Will did it all while they were out getting pizza and they got mad, so the actual production of the record didn't really have anything to do with them.

Will: Sorry.
MRR: So now that we know you guys are influenced by classical rock and into drugs and hookers; where did the name Let it Burn come from? When I first heard it, I immediately thought that it was a reference to the Beatles' Let it Be.
Will: That's actually the first time I've ever heard that.
DJ: Most people think that it has to do with marijuana and most recently people ask if has to do with September 11th. All three of those explanations are one hundred percent wrong. I wish I'd thought of the Beatles reference because that would sound much better. Really how it came up was during the time of Full Speed Ahead, Pete and I were in Barnes and Noble, looking through magazines. I don't know what newspaper or magazine it was, but there was a headline that said Let it Burn. Pete and I both agreed it would be a good band name. We had the name lying around for a while before the band was conceived. So, the name doesn't come from anywhere really; it just stood out on the page real profoundly. That's important, I think.
MRR: One of the big differences between Full Speed Ahead and Let it Burn and some of the other bands that you've been in, is that lyrically, Let it Burn is a bit different. I think, *This is the Sound,* specifically, is an album about heartbreak and that's topic matter that isn't touched by a lot of punk bands.
DJ: Bands that I've written lyrics for in the past, have had mostly politically oriented lyrics. I don't know the reason for it, but when you're young it's really easy to sit in your parents' house and pour out politically charged words you don't really understand. When you get older and you've experienced life a bit more, I feel like there's a lot more to write about. It seems more natural to me to write about my own experiences and the things I feel from, when I get up in the morning to when I go to bed, than to write about vegetarianism or activism. A thousand bands have done that before and I don't feel like I need to write a song that so many bands have already written, and written better. It's more mechanical, you write about facts and figures, whereas now I'm trying to write about things that I feel. Sure, I feel strongly about being a vegetarian, but I don't feel it as much as the topics I do write about. Another thing is, I feel like its sort of taboo within our scene to write about things like losing a girlfriend, falling in love, or having your heart broken. I always thought that was stupid, because those are some of the most real emotions we have, and punk is supposed to be the most real and raw musical genre. Its stupid for those types of things to be forbidden topic matter because punk is about love and it is about heartache.
MRR: Lyrically, what would you say that some of the differences are between the first and second albums are?
DJ: During the time we were writing *This is the Sound*, I was going through a really bad time in my life, and for me, most of those songs have to do with that. During *Here's to Goodbyes* well that period of my life was still going on.
(Will, Chris and Pete laughs.)
DJ: Seriously for me, that second album was more about looking within and trying to see some way to better myself. Whatever may happen and however hard it is, there's always another day. The first record, I'd say the lyrics were really quite depressing and awful.
Will: I don't think they were depressing. I understand, they were your lyrics, but from an outside point of view, I don't see them that way. You were just being honest and I don't think there's anything depressing about that.
DJ: Agreed, I just think those lyrics had some negative connotations and I think that by the second album I was coming out of it and *Here's to Goodbyes* reflected that.
Chris: I think we all took a big step forward musically with the second album. Even since we got back from tour, we've been writing new songs and trying to get it together to make a leap into something new and different.
Will: I know we said it before, but we're tighter as a band now. I can't remember who said it, but I've been told that you can tell when we play live that we're all close friends. You can see that closeness onstage.
DJ: A good friend of mine, who I've know for quite a long time, saw the band recently for the first time. He asked how long we've been together and he said that he could tell that we are four best friends and not just four guys that just play in a band together.
MRR: Why do you suppose that is?
DJ: Well, being in a band is like being married to those people. Being in a serious relationship isn't too much different from being in a band with serious hopes. It's hard to maintain a relationship with one person never mind three other people.
Will: Especially when you're stuck in a van with them for five weeks.
DJ: I can't think of three other people I'd rather go to Europe with or spend five weeks in a van with or spend twenty hours broken down on the side of the road with.
Will: Except when I spill beer all over you when you're driving.
DJ: Yeah, it's all right though, I know that a lot of other bands form mainly because of proximity to one another, but they're not tight friends. Let it Burn isn't like that at all.
MRR: What other things set you apart from other bands?
DJ: At the risk of sounding arrogant, I think that we're better than most bands because we're not safe. There are a lot of bands out there that are safe, and they play it safe. They get really big really quickly, but it's too easy. It's easy to write songs or play in a band that does all the right things. You can look at popular music and it's not terribly difficult to figure out what you need to do to be a successful band. You can get to a certain point and be proud of that success, but for us it's not an option. We don't want to take a safe route. The music we're writing now is such that the next record could be kind of controversial. I could see a lot of people being upset with us and I could see things being said about us doing or not doing certain things. We just want to do what we want. We could always go home and write a record that sounds like any other band, but that's not for us. I would rather sell five hundred records doing what we want than to sell twenty thousand records being the next whatever.
Will: We could go home and rewrite *This is the Sound*, or anything else we've already done, but we want to move on.
DJ: Anyone can find a sound to copy or use a popular sound. You were talking earlier about the garage rock revival and some of those bands are really good, but now there's tons of bands coming out with the same exact sound. They're not doing anything original, but they're getting huge. We just want to take chances and we have. When we first came out, people expected us to sound just like Full Speed Ahead and when we didn't, we didn't do very well at first. People wanted something else and we refused to give it to them. We'll never give the audience what they want. We'll give them what we want. I can only hope that they can respect it.
Will: Tonight was a perfect example. We've only played New York City once before, this was our first time in Brooklyn, a lot of people were there to see us, but a lot of people weren't. The response was still great, despite the fact that these people don't know of us. There was good energy tonight, I guess.
DJ: We played in Sweden and we played a really good show to an energetic crowd. About two weeks later, I got an email from the guy that did the show. He thanked me for coming, and said he couldn't wait till we came back. He said we were the best band that's been around in awhile and that it was great for the city to see a band that came out, played, were full of energy, and gave the crowd something they didn't know they wanted. Getting a response like that makes me think that for the most part we're accomplishing our goal of doing what we want. We got it that night in Sweden. We got it tonight in Brooklyn. A lot of the festivals we played in Europe we were definitely the odd band out, kids would come and tell me how great it was that we played because all of the other bands stick to one set sound.
Will: Well, most bands suck. Fucking quote me on it. It's true. Most bands try to copy everything else. We're doing what we want. We played with a few bands in Europe that I really loved and I still listen to, but most bands suck.
MRR: So one last question: what's up with Rocko's?
Will: What's up with Rocko's? Rocko's, I don't think has such great pizza anymore.
Chris: Uh oh.
MRR: New cook?
Will: I don't know what the fuck happened. If you want a good pizza, go to Pizza Wagon. It's on Eighty-Sixth and Fifth.
DJ: Will, tell him where the Rocko's soundbite on the record came from. Give a little background about Rocko himself, his attitude, whoever answers the phone.
Will: If you listen, at the end of the record, you hear *Rocko's!*
MRR: Doin.
Will: Yeah. Doin. So the guy answers the phone at Rocko's like that. Yeah, but it's me on the CD. What were we talking about?
DJ: Fucking Rocko's.
Will: Oh yeah, Rocko's. Yeah, they changed, man, their pizza.
MRR: *No!* No, Rocko's, it's at the end of the CD.
Will: I don't know! I used to love Rocko's.
DJ: On the CD Will!
Chris: Listen, check it out, when you call there, what do they say Will?
Will: *I told you already!* They say *Rocko's*!
Chris: You didn't say that.
DJ: Watch out, Let it Burn will now give you the run down of the best pizza places in Brooklyn. No, the best pizza places in the world, cause the best pizza comes from Brooklyn.
Will: That's right, not even a question. Lento's you go to for the thin crust pizza. There you go. You bring your friends, you bring your lady friend, or you bring a ninety-nine cents Colt-45, that's where you go. You want something else, you want the fucking Spumoni's, you get the square pizza from Sicily, or Italy. Pizza Wagon is the best. Let's leave it at that.
DJ: One last thing. *Fuck Wilson!*

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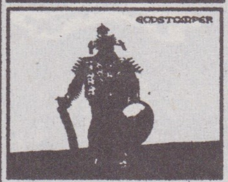

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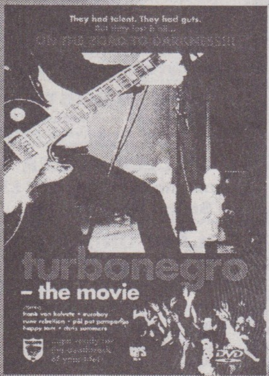

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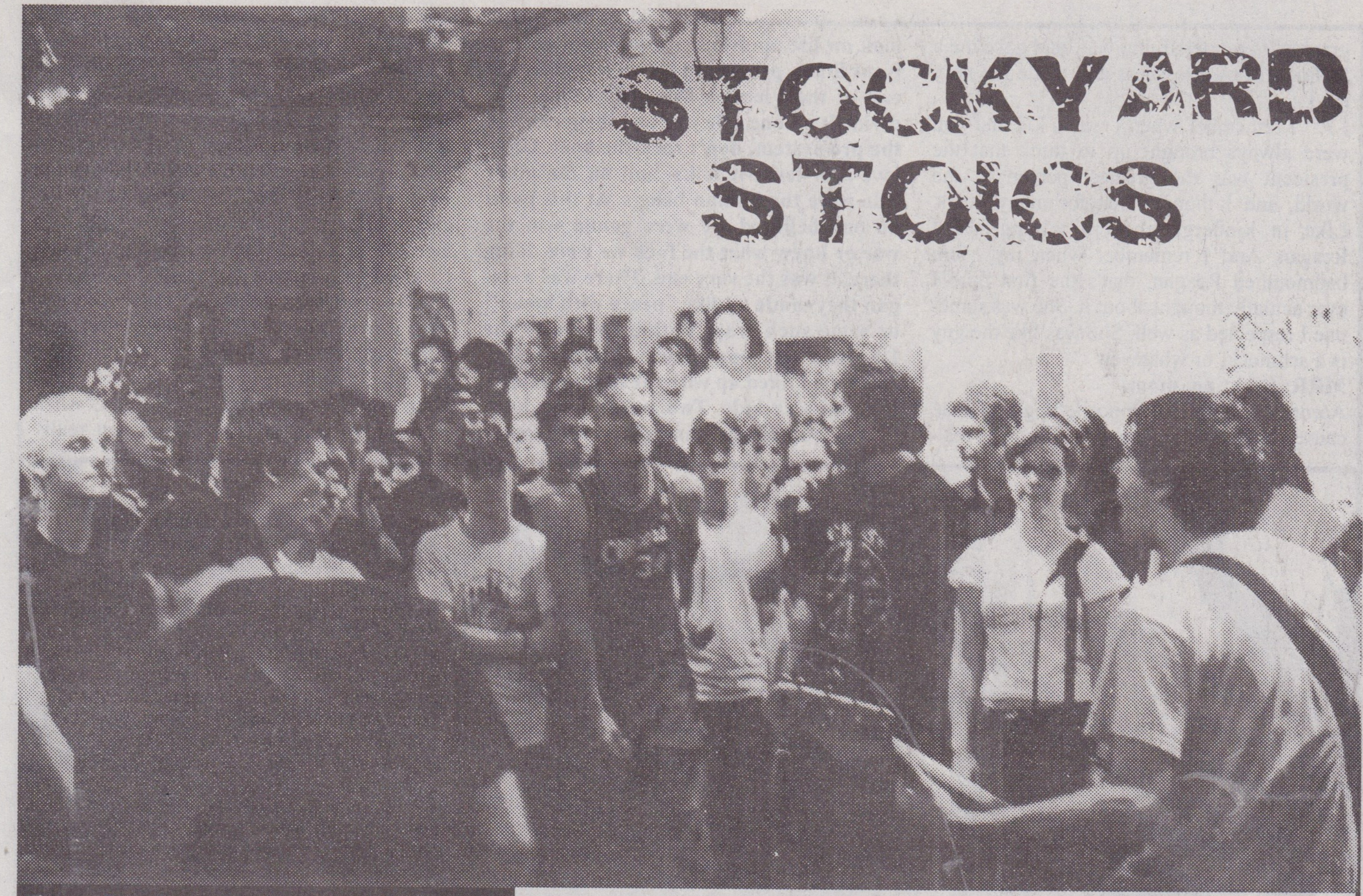

The Stockyard Stoics live in Brooklyn, New York, but they are four guys from Oregon. Of course New York City has a lot of people that come from all over the country to make their homes. But NYC has a very sizable population of transplanted Oregonians. Oregon's loss is our gain here. Anyway, the Stockyard Stoics are made up of Joe Piglet, an exmember of the Rickets and the Redundants, and one of the primary booking people at ABC No Rio; next up is Brendan, exReadymen and current member of MDC; J.P. Otto, who was in Los Mex Pistols, Detonators, and who did a tour with Leftover Crack; and new member, Aron, from the Redundants and Molotov Cocktail. I like these guys. They are movers and shakers scene-wise and politically. They have raised thousands of dollars worth of benefit money for Ahmad Nelson, a young African American man up on false charges in New Orleans. I've known Joe Piglet for ten years or so and gigged with some of them with Chaos UK and MDC in Salem, Oregon some seven years back. We spoke on October 17, '02. Interview by Dave Dictor. Photos by Ulla McKnight and Liv Dillon.

MRR: What is a Stockyard Stoic?
Joe (vocals and bass): There are two facets to that. First one is all about keeping your head up and keeping on trudging ahead even when the shit gets real deep and real heavy and real stinky. And the other facet is that stockyard and stoic are real close to each other in the dictionary.

MRR: Have you ever read about the Greek stoics?
Joe: Yeah, I thought it was really boring. Aurelius was a total complete self-denying frigid shithead.

MRR: Any thoughts about stoicism?
Joe: Really boring word, but it fit alliteratively. It can be used to talk about perseverance.

MRR: I know you are all from Oregon but actually you all now live in Brooklyn. You are all from NYC via Eugene?
Brendan (vocals and guitar): And a lot of other places.
J.P. (drums): Cottage Grove. Football rules, man!

MRR: When was your first gig?
Joe: Our first gig was right around October, it was a Halloween gig, in '99.
J.P.: Was that with me? When did I move here?
Joe: You moved here in April of '00.
J.P.: Oh yeah, that's right.

MRR: What's your favorite band?
Brendan: The Clash.
Aron (guitar): I dunno.
J.P.: The Clash.
Joe: The Clash.

MRR: Second favorite band?
Brendan: Does Muddy Waters count as a band?
J.P.: Bob Marley
Aron: My second favorite has gotta be Sum 41.
Joe: Mozart.

MRR: What cultural or political image do you think has most affected your life?
Brendan: I think the thing that had the most impact on me as a young person in terms of being politically aware was being in high school during the Gulf War, and having this sudden crashing realization that all the abstract anti-war shit that all the hippies in the shithole little hippie town that I lived in were always talking about actually came down to people brutally killing each other for fucking retarded stupid fucking reasons. We didn't know if it was gonna last for a week, or four years, or whatever. It hit me in a very

graphic, vivid, terrifying way, and gave me a feeling of powerlessness and made me very mad.

J.P.: I remember when I was a kid and you were always brought up to think that the president was the greatest person in the world, and I thought that for many years. Like in kindergarten. I'm talking about Reagan. And I remember when my Mom badmouthed Reagan, that's the first time I ever actually thought about it. She was someone I respected as well. She was like the guy is a schmuck, or whatever.

MRR: Right on, mom.

Aaron: I was on the opposite angle of that, cause I have the hippie parents. Before I really knew about government my parents were making fun of Ronald Reagan and basically the political structure, so you know naturally—

Joe: I'd have to be right with Brendan. In fact, I *was* right with Brendan; January 15, '91. All of these people, myself included, worked so hard to keep this horrible thing from happening that every one in their right mind knew was a load of bullshit. But there still wasn't a goddamned thing that we could do. It made me feel incredibly powerless, and made me very much want the future to be different, where people have a say in what's happening in the world.

MRR: I had a similar thing happen, but back a generation. I asked, because *I* have a defining period of my life. It was the early 70s, and I had a pretty straight outlook on life, and four students got shot at Kent State, protesting Nixon's stalling the end of the Vietnam War. My school was divided; on one side you had the jocks and the pro-system, don't rock the boat, USA-love-it-or-leave-it folks, and on the other side were the human beings. At this point no one believed we were gonna win the war or knew what the fuck we were doing there, it was the very end. There was a slogan they made up like "peace with honor" or some such crap. Within two years the US was out and South Vietnam fell. Anyway, I lined up with the human beings, the anti-war kids. Two weeks after Kent State I quit football and threw my clothes into a bonfire while I was on acid at a Grateful Dead concert in New Jersey.

Joe: I'm glad something good came out of Kent State.

MRR: You guys played with Stiff Little Fingers last year. How did that gig go?

Brendan: It was fucking incredible. It was at the Village Underground. I had never played or been there, or heard of a punk band playing there. It was great. Stiff Little Fingers is one of my favorite bands.

MRR: Were they cool? You're wearing their T-shirt.

Brendan: Yeah, they were incredible, they did not disappoint.

J.P.: (laughs) Joe, do you have something to say?

Joe: Stiff Little Fingers did put on a great show, and it was an incredible honor to play with them. But I could not begin to tell you if they were good or not, as people, or whether they liked our band or not, cause they were not in the building until about five minutes before they played. All we saw of them was their drum set hogging the entire stage while we were playing, and their equipment hogging the stage while we were playing, and then we saw these huddled figures rushing pass and pushing past everybody to get down to the stage right about the time that they were due to go on. And just about the same thing happened on the way out; there wasn't a whole lot of human contact.

Aron: That's usually the way it works when you get to open for some band you really like. You're all excited, you're like, "This band's gonna come see us!" and everything and then they're in the bar the whole time, down the street.

Joe: It's got fuck-all to do with what punk is supposed to be about.

MRR: Maybe they were fatigued, I'll give them the benefit of the doubt. Maybe they just do that all the time. People do get jaded.

Joe: Or maybe they've got rent to pay.

Brendan: I think they played awfully well for a band that had rent to pay.

MRR: What's your favorite place to play in New York City?

All: C-Squat.

MRR: Are you playing this year's Cracktoberfest?

J.P.: If it happens. If they have power. (It

didn't happen , there was no electric power.)

MRR: Joe, let me ask you about booking at ABC No Rio.

Joe: ABC No Rio is fantastic to play at, especially fantastic because I book some of the shows there.

MRR: It's a coalition of people, right?

Joe: It's a collective; the hardcore collective books the shows there, and there are a number of different people that set them up. I'm on my way out at the moment because I'm going out of town. But we've had a great time playing at ABC.

MRR: What's your favorite song on your album? What are you really proud of? Is there one song on your album that really means a lot? I mean, they're all your children.

J.P.: I really like "Sad Songs". Joe writes all the lyrics. He's a great lyricist.

Joe: No!

J.P.: "Sad Songs"—the line where he says, "All my best plans end up fucked up/ All your best friends fall down drugged up,"—that's fucking it to a "T". That line always sticks in my head.

Joe: But we are ultimately an optimistic band.

Brendan: I like "Song of Babylon", that one wins for me lyrically every time. Its a great political song that's got enough legitimate emotion in it to not be idle sloganeering. It inspires me every time we play it.

MRR: I like that one. It invokes Sacco and Vanzetti and all those politically minded souls that tried to accomplish change and got all chewed up. We've all had to go through it on one level or another, but we try not to give up. You keep getting up to sing about "everything that we're gonna do."

Joe: I like "Justice Denied" a lot. It's important to me to be able to write political songs that don't just come out and say, "Fuck the government!" That are actually more about serious, very specific shit, like police brutality that's going on, and are just talking about that more on a—

Brendan: More on a human scale?

Joe: On a visceral level. But more so than "Justice Denied", "Land of Opportunity" is probably my favorite song on the record, because I listened to Bruce Springsteen's album, *Nebraska*, for about a month, and that song wrote itself. It's directly ripped off from all of his much better songs.

Aron: My favorite song is "Status Quo". I think they're all pretty good songs, but that song is by their old band, Piglet, which I saw when I was 14 years old and first started going out to punk shows;

Joe: We were 16.

Aron: They were playing that song. I dunno, I guess it's just nostalgia, actually playing it now, but that's my favorite.

Joe: With lyrical update.

Brendan: Polished it up a little bit, got it cleaned up nice.

Aron: It's gotten some updates from the original Piglet version.

MRR: Joe, what was it like going to Palestine when you went over there four or five months ago?

Joe: It was by far the most intense experience of my life. I would recommend it to anybody in the United States. Its so important to go over there, just to get a view of United States' foreign policy from the other side of the fence.

MRR: Who did you stay with over there?

Joe: We, my partner Liv and I, went in right after the bombing in Netanya that killed 29 Israeli civilians, and right before the massive Israeli invasion of the West Bank, and we were stuck staying with a family in a refugee camp in Bethlehem for three weeks. Basically stuck indoors most of the time, as is most of the Palestinian population at this point.

Brendan: Due to a military curfew?

Joe: Yeah, due to military curfew and to people getting the shit shot out of them if they tried to go out for groceries.

MRR: Heavy duty.

Joe: All the kids there collect shell casings from the Israelis. The first night we were there this guy, Sammy, brings out his shell casing collection, and he's holding up all these different bullets, and narrating what they do, and what they come from, and all this other shit, and he holds up this unfired bullet. I don't know nothing about guns, but it was this little pointy thing, in a heavy casing; and he says, "This is a dumdum, and these are considered illegal by the United Nations." And then he tells me about what they do, and what they did to his friend in the camp, a 15-year-old girl, the week before. It went in her stomach and blew her entire stomach, fragmented, out her back. So he says, "Your country is selling these to the Israelis; why are you doing this?" And I had not a goddamned thing to answer to that. (Silence.)

We went with the International Solidarity Movement, and they're leading trips over there all the time. Look for information at www.rapprochement.org. It's the best education you'll ever get. Maybe not the best, but a good one.

MRR: How is the punk scene in New York, in your opinion?

Joe: Commercial.

MRR: What turns you off about commercial punk? I know a lot of things turn me off about commercial punk, no "ins and outs" at CBGB's—

Aron: Don't say anything bad about Sum 41.

Joe: In New York, the logistics of punk are so complicated, because space is at such a premium that all the venues gotta make a ton of money or they won't stay open. And therefore they are assholes. It just doesn't mix well with punk, and as urban renewal hits everywhere the way it hit here, it's gonna get harder and harder to keep punk on a good, ground-level, DIY, grass-roots level.

Aron: I think it's hard here, too, because a lot of kids here are kind of jaded because they grew up with clubs around, places like CBGB's and ABC No Rio, that have had shows. Coming from Eugene, you had one or two punk shows a month, so you basically had to get off your ass and book your own shows, start your own bands, and the majority of people from communities like that grew up with a DIY ethic. But then you move to a town like this, and you get these kids that basically all they care about is their hair, and cruising around St. Marks Place, and they've never even gotten involved whatsoever. And that's kind of why now, with Giuliani and rent going up and recession, there're all these clubs going down, and there're no kids looking for spaces and annexes and other places to do shows.

MRR: Though I grew up in Long Island, my journey led me to move to Austin, Texas, to have a relaxed place to start a band, because it is hectic in New York, and space is expensive.

Aron: It's funny, New York has seven million people, and it still seems like there's that same twenty people that you get in every town that are actually doing everything in the punk scene. You can go to Portland and there's still just as many people that are in all the same bands. There are a lot of bands here, but the bands that play out a lot all have the same members.

J.P.: Guilty!

MRR: Big cities will certainly jade you

Brendan: I think there's more to it than all that. I think there's also the added problem that there's this upsurge in the commercial pseudo-punk that's going around the radio, but it's not really mirrored in the true DIY underground scene, there's not as much cohesiveness in the scene as there used to be. It seems like when I was a kid and I was getting into punk, *Maximum Rock 'n' Roll's* circulation was enormous, *Profane Existence* was out, there were millions of great bands, the scene was super strong all over the world, much stronger than I feel it is today. There were better bands, there were more people involved, the scene had a much stronger concept of itself, and there was a lot more communication between different far away points within the scene than there are now. It feels to me like there's a definite trend towards fragmenting of the scene leading to dissipation of the whole ethic.

MRR: Things go up and down. I remember living in Portland, Oregon four or five years ago, and thinking Brooklyn, Minneapolis, and Berkeley were the three happening spots. I think cycles with drugs and alcohol take their toll, too, and people get weathered and tired and scenes just break up and fragment.

Aron: Another thing that gets to me here, which I guess happens everywhere, is it's very cliquish in the scene. Whereas when I was first getting into punk, it seemed like you'd find someone that was

kind of into, maybe not even punk, but kind of into the same things, and you'd hang out, play music together, listen to records, whatever. And now it's gotten to the point where it's just, like, oh, you're into hardcore, you're into crust, you're into that and everything else sucks. You rarely see bills that are mixed, where you'll get, say, some hardcore band, then you'll get maybe a rockabilly band or a ska band or even a pop punk band. 'Cause somebody will be like, "Oh, well that band sounds like NOFX, they're not gonna play on this bill." Everything is just set shows, which I think kind of kills it.

Brendan: I think that's part of the fragmentation factor. There's so much navel-gazing going on within the scene now, and to a lot of people punk has become codified into a set of rules about how the music is supposed to sound, and there are certain bands that you are supposed to sound like, and there's certain things that you're supposed to do. I mean, not that *we're* particularly doing anything dramatically new. But, I think maybe part of the problem right now with punk is that there aren't any bands out there that are so amazingly fresh and different, and at the same time really great, that the scene can really rally around. And maybe kids are not ready to rally around that sort of band yet, because the scene is still so caught up with bands that sound like bands that broke up 15 years ago.

J.P.: I think the commercialism is good and bad, because in one sense the scene is getting bigger because there's this commercial punk that's out there, so at least people are getting turned onto something, and maybe if they want to they can dig deeper, so at least they're being exposed to it. Where as before maybe they would never even have thought of it. You know, someone in some bumfuck Midwestern town would never have thought of punk before, to research it or look into it. But at the same time, I think a lot of those kids are lazy, and they don't research it, and they just stay right on the surface, and don't try to keep it DIY or keep it together or build a scene in their town. They'll just leave it at whatever comes out of the radio, "I'm force-fed, I'll just buy that and do that."

Joe: I just want to say for the record, being at ABC the last three or four years, where it's a lot of really much younger kids than myself, I gotta say that there's just as many kids there as there were four years ago, and they're just as cool as they were four years ago. I just hope we all keep doing stuff for ourselves, and not just letting companies and people who are making a profit off it do it for us. 'Cause that's how it's gonna stay strong.

Brendan: Hear, hear.

MRR: I know Stockyard Stoics have spearheaded some Ahmad Nelson benefit shows; one that we were part of at the Umbrella Squat, and then one at ABC No Rio. Who is Ahmad Nelson and what is going on with his case?

Joe: Our friend Maga, who all of us grew up with in Oregon, lives in New Orleans now. Her boyfriend is a young Black man named Ahmad Nelson, who has been in jail since April for killing an off-duty New Orleans police officer. He was framed, because he's young, and because he's Black, and because he's poor, and because he's been in trouble with the police in the past. And I assume the police thought they could get away with it. He needs a shitload of money to pay a good lawyer to get him off. And he's gonna get off, but they have a $50,000 legal bill to pay. So far, we've sent, I think, $5000 out of New York. There's a ton of information at www.ahmadnelson.com. The more benefits the better. And everyone in New York has been fantastic about helping out.

MRR: Aron, parting words? About the band, about anything; your philosophy on life?

Aron: I must admit, I'm the rookie in the band, the newcomer.

MRR: But you're not a newcomer as far as your rad-self-ness.

Aron: I'm not doubting my dude credibility.

MRR: I'm just requesting your philosophy on life, in 12 to 15 words.

J.P.: Stay in school! Drink milk! Don't do drugs!

Aron: See you in the pit!

J.P.: To sound like a big hippie, it's nice to be playing music with friends, old friends; we've been friends since we were teenagers.

Brendan: And hopefully we'll be friends for another ten years. At least.

Joe: I gotta say that having MDC play acoustic at Liv's and my wedding has been a highlight of the past year for me. It brought everything full circle very beautifully in my life.

Aron: The pit was out of control at that, too. (laughter)

MRR: Well, thank you.

All: Thank you, Dave.

MRR: The best wedding I was ever at. Bye-bye.

Stockyard Stoics, 805 Broadway #1, Brooklyn, NY 11206
www.jumpstartrecords.com.

Political Resources:

International Solidarity Movement: www.rapprochement.org
Ahmad Nelson: www.ahmadnelson.com.

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Interview by R.J. Sinclair and Ruben Espuni.

MRR: Can you tell me about the beginnings of the band and your experience in the Spaceshits?

KING KHAN: I joined the Spaceshits when I was 17 years old. We all shared a passion for real rock 'n' roll, and we lived the life that we sang about. I always dreamed of exploring the world but never had enough cash, so rock 'n' roll was the best way to run away from home.

MRR: What caused you to form a soul band, and how did you discover soul music?

KING KHAN: Soul music has always been in my blood. As a kid I remember loving "Sittin' on the Dock of the Bay". Watching James Brown on TV when I was ten years old really blew my mind wide open. Though it was only after being in the Spaceshits that I discovered all those fantastic comps like *Shakin' Fit* and *Pow City*, when I first heard those comps I decided that that was the kind of music I wanted to play. Total outta-control ass-shaking boogie music.

MRR: What records did you listen to as a kid?

KING KHAN: I loved Slayer for a while, and I still do. The Rolling Stones, Chuck Berry, Jimi Hendrix... All your typical classic rock shit. I grew up in the suburbs, so there weren't many places to get cool music. When I got old enough to go downtown, that's when I discovered the crazy stuff like the Stooges, MC5, Heartbreakers. Looking back, I think the Ramones are probably my all-time favorite band.

MRR: How was it recording in the legendary Toe Rag studios?

KING KHAN: It was fantastic! Liam "Pig Dick" Watson is an incredible tennis player and an even better sound engineer. The studio is hot, tight, and full of porn. Luckily for me, I love porn, so I had a lot of fun. The whole band had a blast, and we even played a legendary show with the Masonics and the Sidekicks. I had a go-go dancer from Brazil on

stage with me—she was dressed like an Aztec queen. The Sidekicks had a midget named Lenny who breathed fire, and the Masonics had Liam "the finger" Watson on bass guitar. It was a real freak show! The punks loved it and went totally crazy, then the cops came. We had to stop after four songs.

MRR: Is there enough space in a reharsal room for nine musicians? Do you have an air conditioner? How does it smell in the summer?

KING KHAN: We practice in an old bomb shelter and blow minds whenever we play outside of it! It smells rotten, but that's what makes the music so good. Air conditioning isn't necessary when you're so far underground. It's cool and musty, like an old puta madre.

MRR: Yesterday I was watching MTV and I saw a King Khan video—oh, sorry, it was the Strokes. What do you think about the Strokes' hype?

KING KHAN: Don't believe the hype! Public Enemy is still #1!!!!

MRR: People still remember those great King Khan shows from the Spanish tour, especially the Santfeliu one, and the one at Wild Weekend in Benidorm. Tell me about the reaction you got in Spain.

KING KHAN: I love Spain! Especially the fact that people start dancing as soon as the show starts. It's a really great feeling to be on stage and to see everyone shakin' and shimmyin' as soon as you start. In most other places it takes people some time to get warmed up, but the Spanish are always ready to boogie. Puta much.

MRR: There's a rumor that you did some of the backing vocals on the upcoming Prince album. Is this true?

KING KHAN: I haven't done studio stuff like that since I was a child. But I did do the organ solo on the Ramones' version of "Let's Dance".

MRR: Is the new record selling like you expected?

KING KHAN: The album is getting around like a bitch in heat! It's steaming up all the right turntables and will hopefully be responsible for the next generation of puta madres.

MRR: Did you learn to dance by listening to Northern soul music?

KING KHAN: No, I learned how to dance by grabbing a girl and showing her how much I dig her tender ways. For me, the best way to dance is to just let go and let your body do the talking. I actually learned to dance from the singer of Tokyo Sex Destruction.

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MRR: How do you write your songs? Is there a main songwriter? Do you have an established method?

KING KHAN: I wrote all of the songs from the past three years, except a few that were co-written by my guitar player, Mr. Speedfinger. I would just bring my songs to practice and we'd play them. Sam Cook, my trumpet player, has come up with some hits, and Speedfinger has also written some more songs. I feel like a farmer who has had to wait a few years, and now it's finally harvest.

MRR: What is your favorite food? Are you vegetarian?

KING KHAN: I love Indian food and Chinese food—those are definitely my favorites. I love meat (especially chicken, fish, and calamari). I used to eat as much calamari as possible, but nowadays I worry about where the meat comes from, because I found out that gangsters feed their dead bodies to pigs! So I try and stay away from pork.

Madre!! Those shows were some of the best shows we ever played, because the audience was so great. There's a good soul music scene in Spain—I wanna open up King Khan's R&B Academy in St. Feliu de Guixols, if they'll let me. All I get from Spain is good vibrations, baby, good vibrations!

MRR: Tokyo Sex Destruction is possibly the worst Spanish band ever. Do you know any even worse? Tell me what you know about the rock 'n' roll scene in Spain.

KING KHAN: Los Perros taught me a lot about rock 'n' roll in Spain, but when I woke up the next morning I couldn't remember anything. I think any country that has bars like Gabba Gabba, No Fun, and Louie Louie is a place that knows good rock 'n' roll. Madrid was one of the best cities I've ever been to, thanks to all the sin city kids. Munster Records is pretty great too. Tokyo Sex Destruction was actually one of the best bands we've played with., they're super fun rock 'n' roll children. It's too bad the singer loves the Strokes so

MRR: What are your future plans? Will you return to Spain?

KING KHAN: I'd like to tour with my new punk band, The Black Jaspers. Our LP comes out on Rip Off Records next winter. I'm also working on the King Khan Experience's *Are You Serious?* LP, which will be more of a psychedelic project. I will be coming to Spain with my sensational shrines next March. So beware, my children in heat, because we're coming to get you!! HAHAHAHAHAHAHA!!!!

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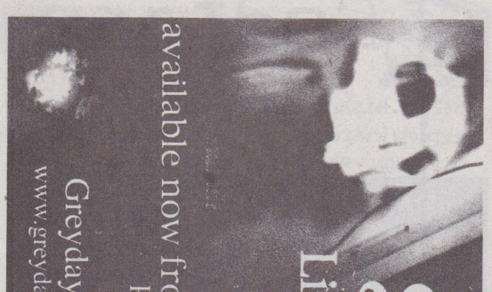

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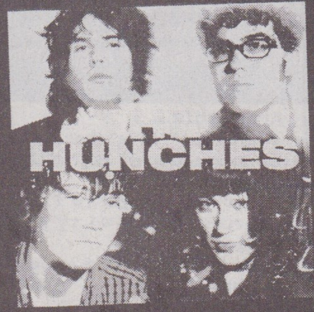

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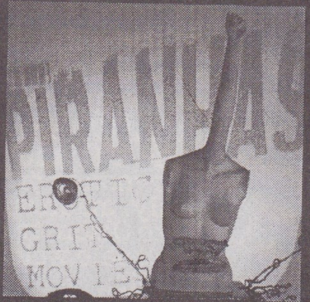

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THE BAD FORM 7"

The debut disk of a maniacal whirlwind of rock n roll madness from this NJ band. Followed up by an appearance on TMU's "Troubleman Mix Tape" and an EP on the Youth Attack label. Too well versed in early hardcore and dissonant no wave to be able to be called a "garage rock" band in good faith. **(Last copies left!!!)**

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Vaudevillian deathrock with a carnivalesque "new wave sound from this veteran NY band. Says Punk Planet, they "should play with the Faint, but they'd probably scare the audience."

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(Out February 2003)

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- --Mushuganas "Summer Shoes" 7"
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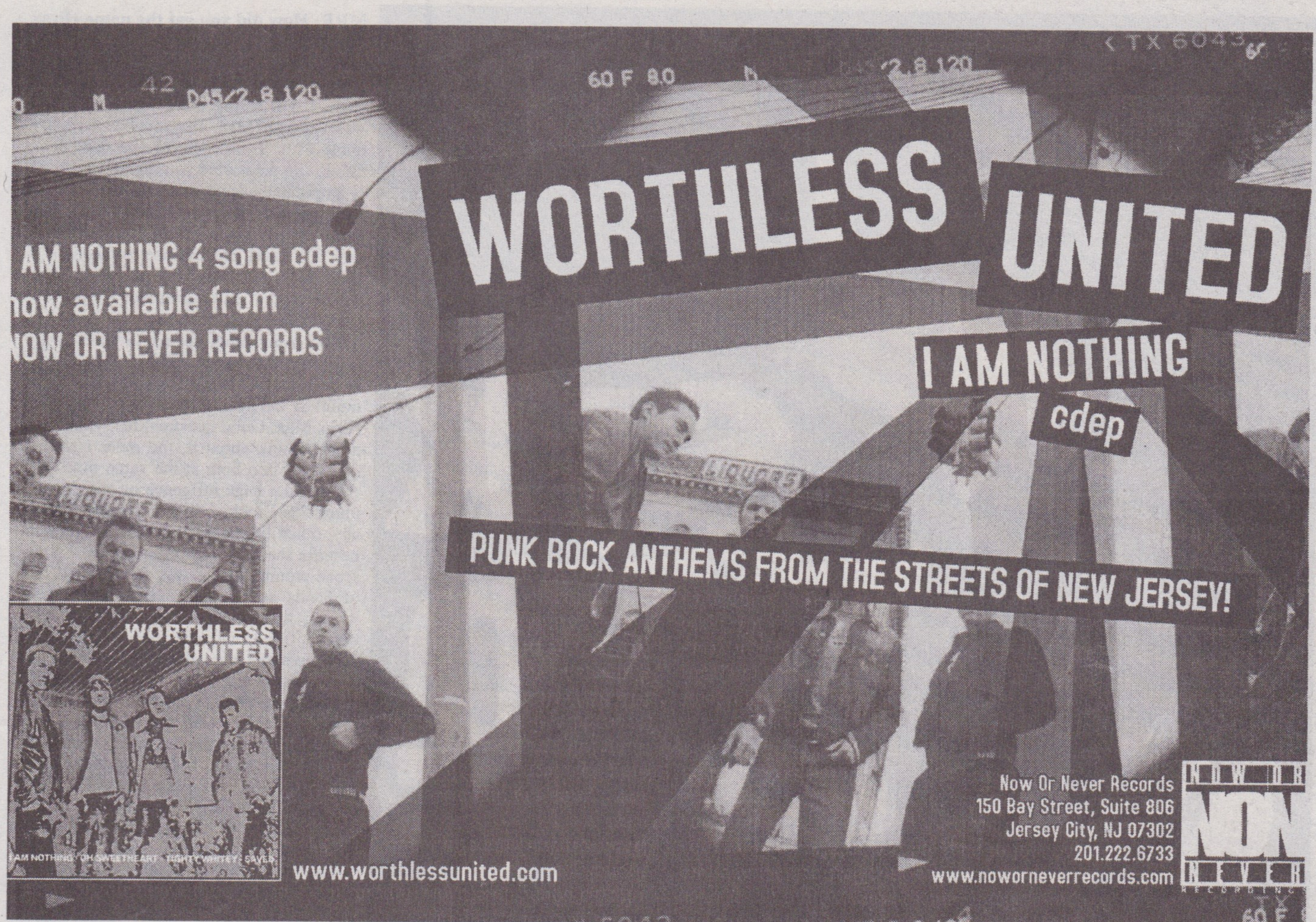

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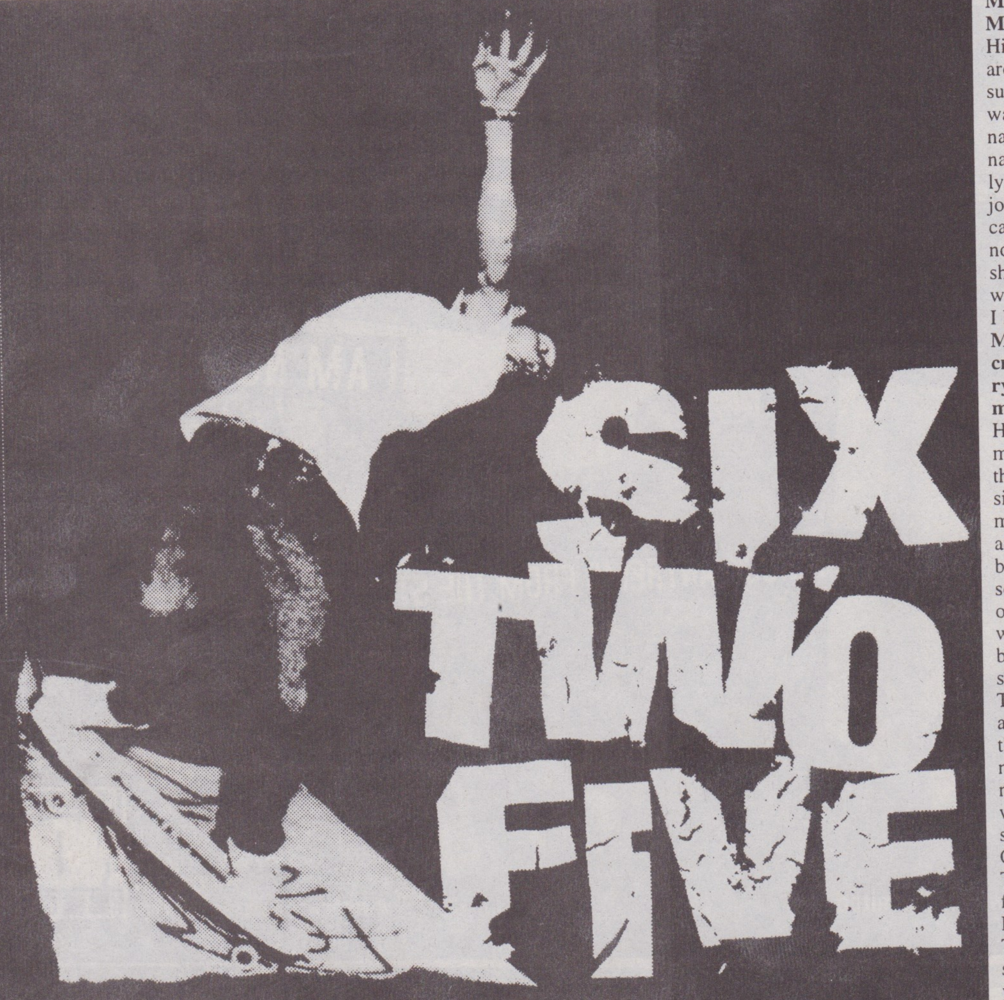


GRINDING DOWN THEIR SYSTEM ONE CURB AT A TIME

I initially knew Max Ward as the drummer from SPAZZ (R.I.P); I was a huge fan of the band. Known as "Hirax Max" to some, he has played in millions of bands from PLUTOCRACY to SPAZZ to CAPITALIST CASUALTIES to WHAT HAPPENS NEXT to SCHOLASTIC DETH. He has written extensively about hardcore from a demo perspective doing a zine called *Mosh of Ass*, writing for *Short, Fast, and Loud* and doing a column for *Maximum Rocknroll*. Max started the label, 625 Productions, in '93, originally focusing on the West Bay cartel of thrash core bands from that period. He is approaching his hundredth release with no signs of slowing down, having released and co-released some great things like the *Possessed to Skate* comp, the *Bandanna Thrash* series, the SPAZZ/CHARLES BRONSON split, the *Bandanna Thrash* flexi, the KURBITS I.R. EP, the SKEEZIKS discography, and the GORDON SOLIE 10". He has helped the North American hear about great bands like the JELLYROLL ROCKHEADS, DISCARGA, D.R.Y., YOUTH ENRAGE, POINT OF FEW, DUMBSTRUCK, CORNERED, and QUATTRO STAGIONE. He has released great bands from here like CHARLES BRONSON, CRUCIAL ATTACK, R.A.M.B.O., PLUTOCRACY, and SOCIETY OF FRIENDS. And he has worked hard at unearthing some greats like HHH, PROTES BENGT, the SKEEZIKS, and the soon-to-be-released RAPED TEENAGERS collection. We have become good friends from being pen pals over the years, sharing a fondness for demos and current Japanese hardcore. I was flattered when the idea came up that I should do a label profile on 625 Productions, because it is my favorite record label. I was also taken aback, as I figured so many other folks would know him better who might be from the Bay Area. But we started with a few emails, swapping incites about the philosophy of what I think will be one of the most influential labels of our time. *Interview by Stephe Perry*

MRR: How did you get the name Hirax Max?

Hirax Max: That was just SPAZZ goofing around, making fun of punk names and such. I was sitting there with Dan and I was saying, "Man, I'm screwed with the name Max. I can't have some cool punk name." So we started coming up with really stupid names and since we were always joking around about the band HIRAX, that came up. It's kinda a wart on my identity now. I'll travel and I'll meet someone at a show and go, "Hey, my name is Max, what's yours?" and sometimes I'll get "Oh I know, *the* Hirax Max."

MRR: Your label seems to have some crossover into metal. What is your history with metal? What were you into first, metal or hardcore?

Hirax Max: Good question, really; and the more I think about it, the more I realize that I got into both at the same time. My sister had a huge influence on me. Not so much that I looked up to her more than in any other brother/sister relationship, but because she was involved in the local punk scene around '81 and '82, so we had a ton of bands and people over to our house when I was young. I heard a lot of stuff being played, and she took me to some shows where I was exposed to some bands. This was when I was in fourth grade, around '83, when I was 10. It was like there was this sound that I heard every now and then that perked my ears. I couldn't describe it, and I didn't know what it was, but I knew it when I heard it. So I started to look for it on my own. I bought Ozzy Records at Gemco (now known as Target) and other things, and I just never found that sound. It wasn't until I got the Bones Brigade video show with the FACTION song in the intro that I heard that sound I was looking for, and that same year my sister kicked me down a tape of a local metal band she was checking out, which turned out to be METALLICA's first record. Both those things had the sound that I had heard in my sister's room, or at the shows she took me too. And once I started buying records like DISCHARGE, D.R.I., and SUICIDAL TENDENCIES, or early SLAYER records, I started to realize there were all these different ways to make that sound.

MRR: So was it your sister that got you into hardcore?

Hirax Max: Yeah, it was my sister. She was going to shows at this place called the Varsity Theater in Palo Alto, in the suburbs of San Francisco. So every time there was a tour going through the Farm or the Vats or On Broadway or Ruthies, the bands would play there too. There was this amazing scene, hundreds of kids would come from all over, and bands like PLH, WHIPPING BOY, RIBZY, GRIM REALITY, SOCIAL UNREST, MISTAKEN IDENTITY, ARMISTICE, EXECUTIONER, and HALF CHURCH would open the shows. So my sister knew these bands and we would have people over to the house all the time. I got to be accepted by these older kids—my sister was seven years older than me—and pretty soon, my sister was sneaking me out to shows. She wanted to show me off to her friends like, "Here's my dorky little brother." But that really fucked me up for life cuz from then on, I was hooked. She got out of it around '83-'84, got really into the LA death rock stuff, but she still hung out with punks. But she kicked me all her records. So I got the

7 SECONDS EP along with the CRUCIFIX LP—she was friends with Sothira—and all this other shit. Some of it took awhile to get used to—the singing, the poor recording quality—but that laid the seeds. So when I was at my most curious, there was a great scene in my area with radio shows and local bands that helped me explore what was going on.

MRR: How many bands have you been in? Did being in bands make you start a label? If not, what were your reasons behind putting out records?

Hirax Max: How many bands...that's a damn good one. I screwed around when I was young with a band called DEMENTED, later named PROCRASTINATION, but that doesn't count. Then I did a band called BACKSLIDE in '87 or '88 which was influenced by the UK scene—it was metallic and fast with low vocals—shit like CONCRETE SOX and DEVIATED INSTINCT, but we were pretty bad. We recorded a few rehearsals, played a few shows, and that was it.

I joined PLUTOCRACY right after that, I guess in '89, and played with PLUTO for three years. That was the first band I did that played around and released some stuff. After that I did SPAZZ, which was originally called GASH. It was going to be a two man project band with Dan, but it slowly evolved into a real band. While I was in SPAZZ I did a few bands; I sang horribly for EVOLVED TO OBLITERATION, and participated in other side projects like BOMBS OF DEATH with Steve from ASSUCK and FULL FLEDGE, a joke sXe band with the BRONSON kids. CAPITALIST asked me to join after Matt left, that was '95 or '96. Then WHN started, and I joined SCHOLASTIC DETH in '99. Then PLUTOCRACY reformed in '97 or '98. Shit, what else—I know I'm missing something. Right now I'm doing SCHOLASTIC DETH, CAPITALIST CASUALTIES, WHN?, and a few new bands: I SHIT YOU NOT which is fast core with people from VULGAR PIGEONS; FxUxN, with WHN, LIFE'S HALT and NERD ALERT members; and STOCKHOLM SYNDROME. Shit, what does that make it, twelve or something?

As for the label, I started it to release records from all these awesome local bands that weren't getting the recognition they deserved. Bands like NO LESS, GODSTOMPER, ETO, and AGENTS OF SATAN. These were the bands that SPAZZ was playing with at the time. We all started at the same time, so it was a small but growing scene. I thought if I could do some small-press EP's of these bands that maybe some real label would be interested in doing something more with them. I wanted to keep 625 a label that was mainly focused on releasing records from new local bands, but it turned into something which I wanted to use to release records from international bands that deserved to be heard as well. I bought demos constantly, and wrote to a lot of people, so I had all these tapes from unknown bands from across the globe that I started thinking about releasing.

By being in bands, I got to meet a lot of awesome people on tour, so that is one thing that has directly influenced the label. We had two-month-old Japanese bands open our shows and blow us out of the water; it made me think, "Dude, these guys need to be heard." Now after coming back from Brazil, I have a few ideas up my sleeve for releasing new and unknown bands from down there as well. There is just so much out there that is new and sincere and I want to help 'em out...either get them in contact with a better label or help them get a record out so people can hear 'em. It has a lot to do with the people in the band, people who are down to earth and sincere. By touring and meeting these people face to face and being able to get to know them, I want to support them even more. I don't want to release a record by a band that is great musically and lyrically but is comprised of a bunch of assholes.

MRR: What were some of these Japanese bands that made an impression?

Hirax Max: To begin with, musically, RAZOR'S EDGE blew me away. CAPITALIST CASUALTIES played with them right after their EP came out, and I was floored. They ended up using pictures from that show for their CD, and lo and behold there's the dumb gaijin—me—on the back of it. I started talking to Kenji after we met at that show, and that's how I got turned onto the JELLYROLL ROCKHEADS demo right when it came out. I have been talking to Kenji for so long about doing some RAZOR'S EDGE records, which might happen this year.

I meet a lot of people too. You know, kids will come up and go, "Here's my band's demo." And on my flight home I pop it in my Walkman and get blown away. I write them when I get back and ask if they want to do something. Or sometimes I will just sit and talk with people and we build a really strong friendship, like the LIE or the CRUCIAL SECTION dudes. Just hanging out with them made me want to support them more. There's an unusual hierarchy in Japan, where new, young bands are made to feel intimidated and out of step with the older and more established bands. So I'm really down with trying to support a band that is just starting and doesn't have scene cred there.

Most of the bands that US and European kids go gaga over from Japan are not liked in Japan by too many people, or they are frowned upon by the older, more established punk bands.

MRR: I was turned onto the recent scene in Japan based through 625 releases. I first heard the terms "bandana thrash" and "fast core" thanks to the flexi and some of your earlier releases like the D.R.Y. EP, the L.I.E. EP, and the CRUCIAL SECTION LP. I later came across a RAZOR'S EDGE release that referred to Japanese fast core as "blitzkrieg thrash". It's a genre in it's infancy working out it's identity. Did terms like "bandanna thrash" and "fast core" come from the Japanese? You have recanted the term "bandanna thrash". What was the problem with that term?

Hirax Max: I'm glad someone bought those releases. And yeah, that RAZOR'S EDGE CD is probably one of the best records I have heard in the past five years. I was going to do a US version on vinyl but it didn't work out.

As for the identity, I would disagree that it's in its infancy. I hear a lot about a "revival" of sorts, but I don't agree with that really. I don't see it as a return or whatnot, because you had bands all through the mid-90s playing really fast, high energy HC as well, but that was termed power-violence. In five years, there will be some new term for the music when a band is influenced by INFEST or HERESY or SOA for that matter. I find that it happens more in waves, and, for some reason, we just went through this really popular wave when all these kids, from emo kids to posi-youth crew kids, were into buying GAUZE records. The same bands they hated three or four years earlier suddenly became cool to listen to. But the core of the music has always been there, I think. You can draw a line from records released by early labels like SST to ADK to MCR to In Your Face to Off the Disc to Slap a Ham to DeadAlive and its one straight line with no breaks.

As for the terminology, oh man. Yeah, that term "bandanna thrash" was just something that we, WHN, or I, with the release of the comp flexi, came up with on a whim, not even thinking. It was a joke, but it did refer to a style of dress that the bands we were influenced from wore. Bands like NEGAZIONE, LARM, HEIBEL, and SKEEZIKS, copied the SUICIDAL look, but played really fast, DIY, political crossover; and that's who we were influenced by.

Japanese bands like FLASH GORDON and CRUCIAL SECTION had been playing that style for years, a lot better then WHN, but that term "bandanna thrash' hadn't been coined. It was all about an 80s style. But once that flexi comp came out, that became *the* term, and WHN got hyped around that time. People started calling their bands "bandanna thrash", and people wrote columns about the history of it, and what not. It never even existed. It was a light-hearted joke, but the term stuck.

MRR: You've recently released some things by DISCARGA from Brazil. Who are some of the bands that you are looking at working with since your trip to South America?

Hirax Max: I've been talking to the I SHOT CYRUS guys for a year or two, and after their tracks on the amazing *Thrashmaster* comp LP that came out last year I asked them if they wanted to do something. I think we are planning on releasing some already recorded tracks, and then doing a US version of their upcoming LP. I want to do a Brazilian EP comp cuz there are so many good new bands, like MIERDA, MAYOMBE, JAZZUS, KONTRATTAQUE, and many others. I think I'm going to do a split EP with DISCARGA down the road—they are, by far, one of my favorite bands—and hopefully I'll work with INFECT and a few others. I totally respect labels like Sin Fronteras out of Minneapolis who are putting out some great punk records from Latin America.

I'm also trying to figure out how to get MUKEKA DI RATO and DISCARGA up to tour the states. The problem lies with getting visas. For some reason, to get Brazilians visas to the states is like squeezing water from a rock. Bands get denied all the time, and people who just want to be tourists get denied. It's totally fucked, I think, but me and Ken *Sound Pollution* are going to try some things. If the kids here saw DISCARGA they would shit their pants.

MRR: What was the first record *625 Productions* released and why did you put it out?

Hirax Max: The first release was the NO LESS/ETO split EP. I had put out some records before that, mainly out of necessity, since no one in '90 in the Bay Area was going to put out PLUTOCRACY records. But once I decided that I wanted to release other bands from this area that I thought deserved to be heard, I decided, well shit, I should start a label; thus 625 was born. The first ten records or so were releases from local bands from that time period, bands where I hoped that once a real label heard 'em, that they would get more records out and be able to tour, which happened. After that, I expanded my horizons to the international scene, but I wanted to keep it to working with either new bands, or bands that other labels weren't releasing. That's been my guiding light till today, although I have strayed from that every now and then.

MRR: Out of all the releases that you have done, what is your most memorable and why? What are you most proud of releasing? What is your most favorite release and why?

Hirax Max: I don't know really. There are a few different releases that stick out for different reasons. The CORNERED releases stick out since everyone always asks me, "Why did you put those out?" But I thought they played an awesome brand of NY-style HC mixed with blast beats. Better than all the Victory shit that was coming out. Plus, they were in high school and were super-sincere motivated kids. The DISCARGA EP happened in a funny way. Daniel wrote to me to tell me that Douglas, the original bassist, loves WHN and had gotten a WHN tattoo. In the package was their demo. When I put it on, I wrote 'em back saying forget WHN, DISCARGA is the best thing I have heard in years. That demo floored me so hard.

L.I.E.'s first EP is still one of my favorites. Horrible cover art, weird layout, no lyrics, but blazing, raw Japanese thrash. And the SOCIETY OF FRIENDS LP—that band is so great, especially live. I think kids are scared of the cover art and the name. It's not your typical "crazy thrash" name or what not, but it's the most insane shit I have heard.

MRR: Where did the name for *625 Productions* come from?

Hirax Max: I was involved in releasing a few records before the first *625* release, but when I

decided to actually start a label I had to come up with a name. *625* is a graffiti crew that Dan from SPAZZ and I belong to. I originally wanted to have the name be WxBxT, or West Bay Thrash, since I was focusing on the local scene, but I had a ton of friends convince me otherwise. So I had to come up with a name on the spot and I chose *625*. Eonz did the logo that I used for the first 30 or so releases.

MRR: What is your association to skate culture? You seem to take a more underground approach with critiques on the mainstreaming of that scene. Do you skate?

Hirax Max: Yeah, in fact the two—skating and HC— have been intertwined my whole life. I used to roll around on a banana board with the neighborhood kids. We were emulating the older kids in our area who were into the late 70s and early 80s skate scene. And my first real skateboard was in 4th grade—well, I don't know about "real" since it was a Sure Grip Blaster; I bought it since it was the biggest fucking deck in the whole store. And as I got more into that, I was exposed to more things related to punk. That Bones Brigade video show with the FACTION song in it, my sister's friends skating, etc. The older kids at my school who skated always had bands written on the back of their jackets, so I would remember the names and go to the store to check it out. Sometimes it would be good, sometimes bad. I still skate now. Me and the SCHOLASTIC dudes have been trying to hit a park once a week, but our schedules are so crazy. So we will try to go hit Alameda skate park for an early morning session, or the Van's indoor park when it's raining. I have a group of friends that I skate street with around SF that aren't affiliated with HC. But we get along since we are all in the same boat: we're nearing 30, we still skate, we're not accepted by most other people. And, like my one friend Zac, he owns his own skate shop called Metro Board Shop. So me and him talk about the trials and tribulations of running a small, underground business.

MRR: You have taken on some pretty monumental tasks with your label. One of them is your ability to compile and release discographies of classic thrash bands like the SKEEZIKS from Germany or PROTES BENGT from Sweden or HHH from Spain. But the first one you released was a recent band: CHARLES BRONSON. Did the CHARLES BRONSON release motivate you to start doing discographies of bands that didn't get their due or was it something else that drives you to engage in this form of hardcore archiving?

Hirax Max: Actually the first collection I did was 625 #2, an EP by this old local band called MORBID LIFE SOCIETY. They would open shows at both the thrash metal shows and the punk shows. They were right in between. A little speed metal, a little fast hardcore. After I did the first release I thought, "Wouldn't it be awesome to release the old MLS demo?" The ideas are born out of my own tastes when I was younger. What I was listening to 13 years ago, and me thinking "Whatever happened to that band?"

Discographies are cool because you get a band's entire retrospective on one format. Instead of hunting on eBay for four EPs and two LPs and various comps, you get a release that usually has everything (sometimes not). I try to do the discographies with info and art and just as much stuff as you can get to really capture the life of a band. I wish I could do vinyl version of all the discographies, but you have to resort to CD format due to the length of the material with most of them.

CHARLES BRONSON was born out of us talking about doing an LP. We'd always talked about it since they started, and when it finally came down to it, they did one on Lengua Armada since they lived so much closer to Martin and Martin's constant support of the band. So I told 'em, "Listen man, we gotta do something, and if you're bust, what will it be?" So that was at the same time Mark was starting Youth Attack Records, and we all went in on the release. Mark facilitated the whole thing, so I didn't even really have too much input. In fact, when it came time to repress—I sold out of it in like, two seconds—I had to wait for a long time till the others were ready and had money.

MRR: How did the PROTES BENGT discography come about?

Hirax Max: The PROTES BENGT was the first really archival thing I took on. People in the mid-to-late 90s talked like everything that was happening at that time was new and the most extreme. I would always talk about the bands that got me into fast music in the first place, like PROTES BENGT, SIEGE, RUIDO DE RABIA, HHH, OLHO SECO, SOB, NEOS, YOUTH KORPS, etc. Just all these bands that went as fast as they could be. And at the time, the shit was obscure, and only a few people knew and cared about those bands. So I thought, shit, it would be awesome to try to contact some of those bands and see if they would be into reissuing their stuff. I sent a letter to an old PROTES BENGT address and it got returned. I was so bummed that I talked about it at a SPAZZ practice and Chris told me he just got a letter from Per, so I got the address and we went from there. I'm way into that coming out again, especially with the second demo tracks on there, although I wish there was more to look at, the insert is minimalist. But that's what Per sent, and not too much happened with that band; they were really only a side project. I'm toying with the idea of rereleasing that again either more on vinyl or maybe on CD.

MRR: How did the HHH discography come about?

Hirax Max: The HHH discography happened the same way. I wrote the band, never heard from them. I talked to a few kids in Barcelona and they said they were really hard to get a hold of. I brought the idea up with my friend Yann from *Boisleve* and he said he had been writing to Joan. So we got to talking and it came together. I'm way fucking proud of that one, man, although it was really Luc from *Ratbone* Zine and FACE UP TO IT that did all the layout stuff in France. He did an amazing job. I'm trying to keep that double CD in print so people will have the chance to get it far in the future—to keep the memory of HHH going. When they were around, I don't think too many people knew about them outside of Spain. I used to go record shopping with friends and find their LPs and tell them "You fucking *have* to get this," and my friend would be looking at the cover like, "Who the fuck is this?"

MRR: What's with the RAPED TEENAGERS discography, how did that happen?

Hirax Max: As for RAPED TEENAGERS, that band never got the credit they deserved at all. I would talk to my friends in high school about RT and they would kinda shrug it off like it was just too eclectic for them. Their first EP and MLPs are so amazing. Even the later stuff is done so well. So I talked to Henrik from OUT-LAST/DEAD END and I told him how much I loved RT and he said, "They are from my home town." So we got in contact with them, and Henrik was able to get some old demo and unreleased material. It's being dropped to DAT tape right now, so I should have some stuff to master in a few months. Kids will drop a load when they hear the old RAPED TEENAGERS stuff.

MRR: Do you have any other discographies in the works? What would you like to see released on terms of some hardcore classics that have not gotten the attention they deserve?

Hirax Max: Other discographies in the works are FLASH GORDON (they are still going) and a SPIT-FIRE collection. SPITFIRE are this amazing HC band from Sapporo that existed from '87 to '89. The whole Sapporo scene in the mid-80s got glanced over since they weren't playing metallic crossover like the famous Tokyo bands and whatnot. The kids up there were more influenced by the older US hardcore bands like MINOR THREAT and SOA. So I'm at Mitch's house from FACE OF CHANGE and he throws on this video from SPITFIRE and I couldn't believe it. It was like a LIFE'S HALT show nowadays but from '88 in Sapporo. I'm going to put their demo and a live show on a CD along with the same video footage that I saw. It really is amazing. I'm trying to get some of the older Sapporo bands out so people can hear a bit of Japanese HC history that was overlooked at the time and long since forgotten about.

MRR: You also have a history for putting out some of the most righteous comps from the *Bandanna Thrash* flexi to the *Barabaric Thrash* series. These comps are on par with *Cleanse the Bacteria*. But comps are so labor intensive. You have some new ones out as well, including the *Murderous Grind Attack* and the *Four Corners* comp. I get the sense that you are exposed to so much hardcore you wish you could put out and comps enable you to come close to reaching that mandate? Why do you do comps? Do you have any comps in the works?

Hirax Max: Oh shit man, you're blowing smoke up my butt. I think others would agree with me that the comps I do are not comparable to *Cleanse* or others, but thanks for making that comparison. It's flattering, dude. The way I think about comps, or I should say, the comps that I would like to emulate, are more of the sampler comps, the ones that expose bands either for the first time, or bring together bands from all over onto one format. Some of my favorite comps, put out by one of my favorite labels, *MCR*, are the *Unknown HC Drunkards Flexi* series or the *Best Run Fast Series*. They focused on new bands, gave them space for two or three songs to strut their stuff. Some of those bands didn't even do anything after that, while others went onto be the ones we regard as classics. Another label that did awesome comps is Adventure Family Records out of Yokohama. They covered bands from scenes that were outside of the major cities in Japan. Other examples of my favorites would be the old BCT tape comps, or the old Ataque Frontal LP comps from Brazil.

It's really easy for a label to go "OK, I'm going to ask all my favorite bands for one song and I'll have this killer comp," but what's the point? It's too easy to go after all the hyped-bands and try to make some monumental comp.

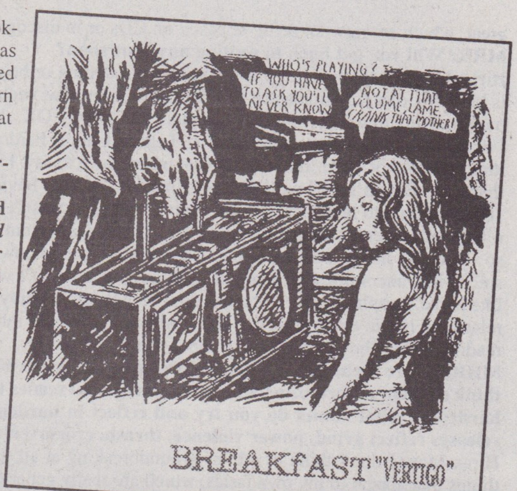
And yes, your question does get to another point. I buy, trade, and get a million demos, so I'm exposed to all these killer bands. So I think man, wouldn't it be awesome for these people to get a little exposure. That's the concept behind the newer versions of the *Barbaric Thrash"* series; taking bands from all over the world that just released a demo and compiling them on one format. The next is Volume III and will have 34 bands from all over the world on 2 CDs with a bonus EP that has a great, old ASOCIAL demo on it where they are playing 1000mph HC. It's going to be an insane double CD with an EP in a 7" booklet. I'm working on Volume IV right now, as well and am planning a few regionally focused versions of it later: Brazil, SE Asia, Northern California, etc. I feel more inspired by that approach to comps.

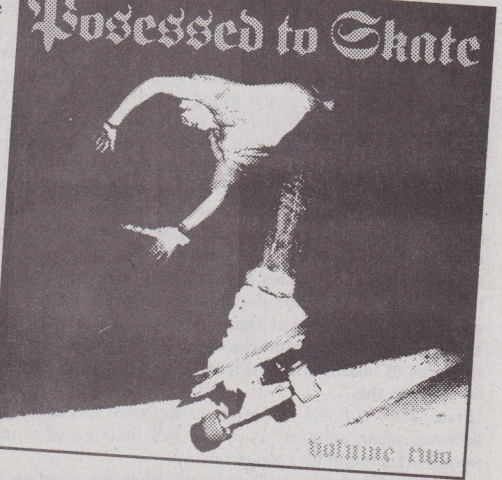
MRR: You have a fondness for demo formats. So much so that you've done demo-only zines like *Mosh of Ass*. I used to read your contributions to *Short, Fast & Loud* and the column that you used to do for *Maximum* religiously. What is the appeal behind demos? For me, it is the rawness of a recording, the energy that hasn't been killed by studio production. I also like the accessibility of the format for smaller runs and the exclusivity for those in the know. What is the appeal with demos?

Hirax Max: I love doing *MOA*. I get to sit down for a few hours each day and listen to a few tapes and review them. You know, sitting there with a Walkman on, folding out the cover and trying to get a sense of this new band. Like I said before, some of the best stuff a band does is on their demo.

Some of the time, I like the recording quality better on demos, sometimes you can get a really good raw recording out of a 4-track. So yeah, I agree, studios sometimes kill a band. About the accessibility factor, I think demos are an easy format you can reproduce at will, and when given consent, people in other places can record the demo for their friends, or through their tape distro. There are a few people in Western Europe and the US who are still doing tape labels, or started tape labels...like *RISK* here in SF. But in Eastern Europe and SE Asia, tape labels are THE way music gets around. I work with a few labels in Malaysia in order for them to reproduce a CD that 625 puts out for their tape labels; the music gets around that way. So I see it in another light than exclusivity. I think it increases availability in places where most people don't have record players or CD players. But yes, Western punks are more inclined to buy a "legitimate" release on vinyl or CD format before they send $3 in the mail to get a tape.

Another reason that I tend to like demos is that anyone can go out and do it. All you need is some cash to buy some blank tapes, a tape recorder, and a copy place near your house and you have a demo. Sell 'em for $2, give 'em away for free, doesn't matter. It's easy, cheap, and completely DIY. Once we start talking about vinyl and CDs, we're talking about having to start with $500 or $1000 to make 'em. I'm down for CDR demos in theory, since it's the same thing basically (you producing and manufacturing your own music cheaply). But then again, CDs have that digital sound that I don't really like. And finally, I like demos out of nostalgia. When I was younger, bands would open shows for years without any records coming out. They would be the biggest band in an area, drawing 200 people, and they still only had demos, so you would just get all these demos from your local bands. And once I started learning how to write bands and mail-order, based on info out of *MRR*—Walter Glaser reviews were like my bible, he would say, "This band is faster than D.R.I." and my $3 was in an envelope in 5 minutes— I got all these demos straight from the bands that were





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great, which are now all being released on CDs or in discographies.

MRR: Will you get back to writing any time soon?

Hirax Max: Honestly, I don't feel comfortable writing or being in print—which is kind of a contradiction since I'm doing this interview, yeah. I felt weird every month sitting down in front of a computer and going "OK, this is how I see it." I really enjoy one-on-one conversation, I can talk about hardcore forever, or politics, or whatnot, but I like to hear what others have to say. I want to listen more than talk. But as far as writing some diatribe and then having it published for 10,000 people to read and interpret their own way, I wasn't into it at all. I wasn't a good writer. I change my mind all the time, I learn from people all the time, so I just felt like it wasn't for me. I don't want to be known as an individual, since I feel uncomfortable being in the spotlight; and that's what the column felt like to me. I applaud others who can do it though, and I enjoy reading some stuff related to music every now and then. Although I would rather spend my time reading history books than books about punk rock music.

MRR: There seems to be a groundbreaking nature to *625* releases. I think of them as forerunners for various regional scenes that make up hardcore. What scenes do you try and reflect in hardcore? Do your releases reflect grind, power violence, thrash, crossover, fast core.....

Hirax Max: I don't think of *625* as groundbreaking at all, I only put out those things that appeal to my own tastes, which are really generic. What I mean is, I like energetic and fast punk rock, which can be categorized as everything from some forms of New York HC to grind to garage punk. That's why I thought I was horrible at reviewing stuff for MRR, I liked it all, and even some bad stuff had a little ounce of credit since they seemed to be at least putting their hearts into it.

As for the label, I'm not looking for that band that is completely advancing a style, or writing music that is one hundred percent groundbreaking. If the people in the band seem nice, and our politics don't clash, and they seem to play music that I like pretty well, than I would consider helping 'em out if need be. Of course, there are other factors, but basically I would consider a band, if they were nice people, if they sounded like anything from FEAR OF GOD to GORILLA BISCUITS, you know? I mean, that's a pretty wide margin, I'm not trying to pin-down a "market", I'm trying to put out music that I like, made by people who I relate to. So that's everything from mosh to thrash to power violence to grind to punk to whatever other term there is.

MRR: In your opinion, what is the next thing to happen with hardcore? Felix Von Havoc approached this issue in a column of his, in which he thinks straight edge and d-beat will be converging. Where do you see musical influences within hardcore heading?

Hirax Max: Who knows? I mean, we can all have projections of what might happen around the corner, but I'm not really concerned with that. I mean, four or five years ago people went gaga for math metal, stuff like DILLINGER ESCAPE PLAN or even DISCORDANCE AXIS. The reviews said that it was never done before, it pushed things to the extreme, blah, blah, blah. For me, I never related to it cuz I thought it didn't have the catchiness or soul that the punk stuff I liked contained. So while everyone was throwing gas on that fire, I just wanted to hear more of the sound that I already knew I liked. If something comes along, some new style, or new vocal style, like how grindcore changed vocal styles in punk, that I can relate to, then I'll be a fan, but I'm not too concerned with what is gonna happen next.

MRR: What are some of your observations with the various scenes that you have visited? Let's start off with North America. You have toured the states a bunch of times, where are the unique scenes and what contributions are they making on the current scene? What about some of the places abroad. You have been to Japan and your label spends some time documenting the current scene there. What are some of things about Japan's scene that are influencing hardcore? What about Brazil, what are some of your observations about Brazil in terms of lasting or significant input. How do Australia or Sweden factor into this?

Hirax Max: At first I was going to approach this as a "what is the differences between scene cultures" question. But thinking of it in terms of "contributions"—this might be a tough one.

You know, punk is pretty much the same no matter where you go. There is a certain ethic that goes along with it: rebelliousness, DIY, and a rejection of the music industry, but the differences lie in how it gets culturally expressed. So the contributions are just different expressions of that same energy, that same rebelliousness.

And all the places I have been, and all the places where people I trade with are from, seem to generate multiple forms of punk rock. I mean, every scene has a thrash band, a grind band, a sXe band, a mosh metal band. Before I would travel to some place, in my ignorance I would think, "I wonder what this place will be like?" I'd think that it was going to be one hundred percent foreign and unusual to tour there, and every time, although there were differences, there were a lot of similarities, as well.

So, to answer your question, I think every place contributes a great deal to the collective history and effort of punk rock in multiple forms, its just that those scenes with the most wealth—US, Japan, Western Europe—tend to manufacture and distribute more of it, and tend to set the trends within it. Hopefully that will change a little. Also, although there is a really strong activist strain in the US and European scenes, I think that punks are more politicized in second- or third-world countries—I hate using those terms. In some places, just to be punk is to risk your security, and in other places, like Brazil, even the bands that are playing generic forms of youth crew straight edge have super political ideals and things to say from the stage. These punks are politicized because their lives are politicized. I just wish these areas had as much focus on them as the tired old scenes that we constantly focus on.

MRR: There seems to be a real cooperative spirit behind your label. 625 is involved in a lot of split and joint releases. You seem to get behind releases financially or with your distribution network, with your enthusiasm, with your name and reputation. How come you do so many co-releases? I see so many folks soured on cooperative ventures—it is refreshing to see somebody making it work. What is the secret?

Hirax Max: The secret? Working with the right people is one. Generally, there are multiple reasons why I have been involved in coreleases. Sometimes a band asks a million labels for help, and those labels all put their heads together to see what they can do. Sometimes a label is going to release something and it's going to be only on CD, so I offer to do vinyl if I think it's a release that needs to be on vinyl. Or I'll release it if it's going to be released by a foreign label and I know not too many copies will make it to the States or Europe. Then there's also the fact that I like to work with other labels in the same way that I like to work with bands. You get to know someone better through doing a project with them, and you have more input and whatnot. If it works right, it's a better experience.

I have been involved in a few projects where I had no control over what was going on, I just added money in or something. And I got really frustrated with how I couldn't get represses, or how it came out. But that has only happened a few times.

On the other hand, I'm working on a compilation called *FOUR CORNERS* right now, and it has been in the works forever! Seriously, like two years, and three other labels are going in on it. Well, some shit didn't come through, mainly due to artwork problems. And, so, two years later, there are these labels who are waiting patiently to get this ball rolling, and I feel responsible since I was the facilitator of it. One of the labels had to drop out. Now the bands' artwork issues got resolved, and it is finally going, after almost two years. But it didn't turn out to be the experience I was hoping for when I first started the project.

MRR: What is in the works for 625 Productions? What can we expect to see you release in the next little while?

Hirax Max: Releases by :

•THE FUTURES (Japan) LP (vinyl version of CD on MCR)
•I QUIT! (Sweden) 2nd EP
•THEY LIVE (New York) brand new LP and CD (bonus tracks on CD)
•SPITFIRE (Japan) collection CD
•EUs ARSE (Italy) collection LP,
•CIRCLE (Japan) Debut EP,
•KURBITS IR (Sweden) LP,
•RAPED TEENAGERS (Sweden) collection,
•FREAKS (Japan) EP,
•SECRET 7 (Singapore) EP
•COMPLAIN (Japan) EP,
•I SHOT CYRUS (Brazil) EP and LP,
•NEVER CONFORM (Japan) EP,
•REAGAN SS (US) debut EP
•RAZORS EDGE (Japan) Vinyl version of older releases,
•HIGHSCORE (Germany) second LP,
•REPROACH (Belgium) / MAD RATS (Portugal) split LP
•JELLYROLL ROCKHEADS (Japan) collection LP,
•QUATTRO STAGIONE (Germany) 10" or LP,
•DISCARGA (Brazil) / MAD RATS (Portugal) split EP ,
•WHAT HAPPENS NEXT (US) surprise EP,
•FLASH GORDON collection release,
•DYSTROPHY (US) EP

Plus the following compilations:

•*Four Corners* LP with: LIFE'S HALT (US), DEAD END (Sweden), HIGHSCORE (Germany), POINT OF FEW (Holland) and RAZLOG ZA (Croatia);
•*Barbaric Thrash Vol. III* 2xCD and EP - 34 new bands from all over the world, plus a crazy ASOCIAL demo from '82;
•*Barbaric Thrash, Vol. IV* (format?) - Working on it right now;
•*Bay Area New Band* comp EP with - VOETSEK, DYSTROPHY, DELTA FORCE, SCHOLASTIC DETH, ELEPHANT MAN, LAB RATS and SHARP KNIFE;
•*SoCal New Band* comp EP WITH APATHETIC YOUTH, HIT ME BACK, NERD ALERT, OUT OF VOGUE plus a few more;
•*SE Asian New Band* comp EP with: FOR THE KIDS, SECRET 7, EDORA, FASTGAME and DOMESTIK DOKTRINE; and
•*Brazil New Band* comp EP: in the works

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FEAST OR FAMINE

Feast Or Famine is a horrendous chaos noise attack. They represent a continued resurgence of dark sickening noise that should bring you flashbacks of the earsplitting damage of old school from Japan, Sweden, etc. They formed in the bowels of Detroit's grind punk past, from the ashes of Annoyance, Lindane, Nyarlathotep, Projectile Vomit, etc., to crush your fucking skull in. If you love music, complacency, and the comfort of ignoring what's going on, skip to the Reviews section. If you can take a dose of noise and reality with a side of sarcasm, read on. This interview was done shortly after their former bassist, Steve, the famous torchbearer of the soft serve cone, was jettisoned back to Suburbia.

Interview done by Tony 4TG.

MRR: So let's get the generic questions out of the way. Who does what in the band and how did you form?

Jeff: All right, I'm Jeff, the psychopath behind the madness. The band was pieced together by the same guy who created the Backstreet Boys. No, not really. We were four punks who'd all been friends for years and were tired of the tame shit coming out of this garage- and indie-rock infested town, Detroit. We were like, "Let's shake things up a bit," and there's when Feast or Famine was created. Death to white belts and shag hair!

Tim (guitar): FOF formed out of the ashes of basically every crust band to come out of the Detroit area in the last five years. After the demise of my bands, Lindane, and then, The Nihilists, I had a hard time finding people to play with, because everyone into real punk already had bands or had never picked up an instrument. After the demise of Jeff's band, Nyarlathotep, we talked about doing a band, and we called up The Pope, whose band, Projectyle Vomit, was close to ending. We got Zanne Rehash to play the bass even though she never played before and the rest is history. Now that Jaysklar has joined, you can add Motor City crust pioneers Annoyance and Left In Ruins to the list of bands we have ex-members from.

Jaysklar (bass): Well put.

MRR: Now you guys proclaim yourselves "thrash from the past" but you are a current band. Care to elaborate on this?

Tim: By some freak twist of nature, we may be physically in the present, but all our heads are stuck in the 80s. We could not concern ourselves any less if we tried with the current bands that people try to pass off as punk rock. So, basically, It's a calling or a warning, depending on your point of view. If you're stuck in the past, like us, and want to hear raw, pissed, hardcore punk, then you should know where we are coming from. If you want to see the next big trend, you're gonna hate us. We also have a certain aesthetic in the band that people think is long dead. Most people around here associate "punks" with the Slipknot mall kids or with the trendy pretentious spock rock emo shitbags. Well here's a little pretension for you, we are here to say *you're not punk!*

Jeff: Yeah, I love the kids who come along and question us when we're the ones putting on the damn show that they're attending. Fuckin' clueless...we've been called nazi's, well, I have, particularly by fashion punks, whatever. We know who'll be around in five years and who'll be long gone.

MRR: So was your name an intentional swipe from the D.I.R.T. cassette-only release of the same name?

Jeff: The name was a completely intentional swipe. I can't remember who came up with the name. I think it was me or Zanne Rehash, who was our original bassist. Zanne and I are both big peace punk fans of anything on Mortarhate, Fight Back, Crass Records, and thought it would fit the band well. Especially in Detroit, where the dividing line between Detroit and the suburbs is quite distinct. It's like day and night, or "feast or famine"; hence the name.

Tim: We had a whole list of potential names and I think that

Feast or Famine was one of the only ones we could somewhat agree upon. Yeah, a few observant and knowledgeable people have noticed that swipe from the *Death is Reality Today* cassette, and they tend to think that we are going to sound like D.I.R.T. Especially when Zanne was in the band, they must have thought she looked like Deno, with the dreadlocks and all. Then they were efficiently leveled by the shear mass of raw sonic bombardment and our inability to actually play our instruments.

Jeff: Zanne looks nothing like Deno, but Tim sorta looks like Dino from the Flintstones.

MRR: Playboy Bubba, from the world-famous Bump 'n' Uglies, wants me to ask Jeff how you manage to be so sensitive yet so fierce. How do you balance these two sides? Tell us Jeff, is it hard to be so sensitive and sincere, yet so fierce and punishing?

Jeff: Is this a trick question? OK, I have been diagnosed recently with multiple personalities. Three to be exact! I don't know if I necessarily believe that, but it may be part of the reason. When Feast or Famine play out It's such an outlet and release for me. Particularly because I hate a lot of people, many of whom are right in front of me, watching us! Little do they know!

Jaysklar: Yeah, Jeff's a psycho-scary gerbil.

Jeff: Scary? Hardly the case. Psycho? Maybe? *A gerbil?*

Tim: Good question coming from Bubba, considering he balances being the most sophisticated and handsome gentleman in Detroit with being the most feared and deadly wrestler in the world. Seriously though, when the fierce side comes, watch out! I've been hit with bottles, mic stands, and fists from being on stage with Jeff. It's okay though, because I think that everyone in the band has a side in them that comes out when we play live. It's therapy to play live. I think that if we didn't have the opportunity to go in front of people and blast them with noise, screams, and opinions, some of us probably would probably snap and kill someone or themselves, or both.

MRR: Now, you write songs decrying record collecting, but at the same time at least one of you has a very sizable collection and you also did two limited versions of your record. What up with that? Is the record collection the musical phallic equivalent of a Trans Am?

Jeff: Tony, I think you've been misguided! That song is completely serious. Everyone has their poison, and fucking punk records are mine and I am sure that's true for others in FOF. Hell yeah, two limited versions of the EP were made available only through the mail or at our release show. One had a transparency cover with a bonus one-sided EP and the other just had the bonus EP.

Tim: Everyone seems to think that "Drug of Choice" is a joke, but it was written in all seriousness. Everyone in the band has sizable record collections, and with the addition of Jaysklar the legend only grows. We jokingly dubbed our summer tour the We Came for Your Records tour. I mean this is the band that went into one unsuspecting record store in Portland and spent about $1500 collectively. I think that when we tour we are more excited to hit up record stores then to actually play shows! As far as the record collection being the musical equivalent of the Trans Am, I think that as long as you collect because you love punk and the music it's cool. When it comes to the point that your only relationship with punk is to horde rare records for the sake of collectiblity then that's a little fucked. I'll listen to everything I own and I don't buy records because of their "trend" appeal. Yes, we are guilty of putting out limited records. The transparency cover of the first EP was a direct rip off of the Negative Approach EP that included a bonus EP. All 25 sold out at the release show. After that there was 75 records that came with the bonus record that might still be floating around out there in a distro.

Pope (drums): Record collecting is in my punk rock blood. Every punk kid should own a record player.

MRR: What bands serve as inspiration for your sound? I can pick up on a few things, and I pretty much know, but enlighten the readers.

Jeff: I can't really comment too much musically. Tim and the Pope have done most of the writing, though I do comment on what they come up with. Lyrically, I think we're influenced by bands like Negative Approach, Flux of Pink Indians, Septic Death, and Soar Throat. At least, I like to think so. What do you think, Tim?

Tim: Goddamn, this could get long. Should I just start listing bands? Well, I personally am really influenced by the mid-to-late 80s English peace/crust scene. Bands like Anti Sect, Anti System, Death Sentence, Civilized Society?, Broken Bones, Discharge, Sacrilege, Napalm Death, ENT, Axegrinder, Desecrators, Heresy, Amebix, Disorder, Concrete Sox, Deviated Instinct, and the like. Mix that sound with the intensity and ideals of old US hardcore bands like Black Flag, Negative Approach, SOA, The Crucifucks, and The State. Add a healthy dose of influence from every hardcore band outta Sweden, Finland, Italy, and Brazil circa 1980-1985. We mustn't forget to include the over-the-top stage presences and sounds of Japanese bands like GISM, Kuro, Confuse, Gai, State Children, The Clay, The Comes, and SDS. Throw in a pinch of two-fingers-in-the-air suss stolen from English punk and oi bands like Chaos UK, Instant Agony, The Insane, Uproar, Blitz, The 4-Skins, The Skeptix, The Fits, Chaotic Youth, and The Threats. Last, but not least, I can't forget the influence I've gotten from early thrash metal bands like Celtic Frost, Motorhead, Venom, Onslaught, Destruction, and Repulsion. Whoa, my brain is starting to hurt so I'll stop now.

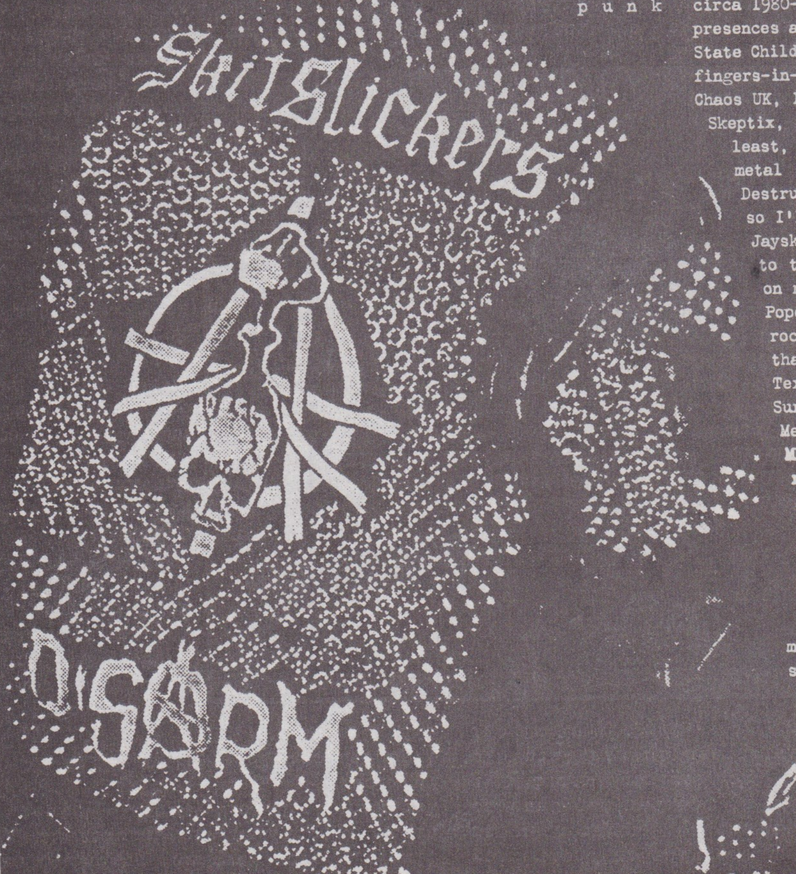
Jaysklar: I am hoping to bring a brutal Scandinavian influence to the band, even though that seems to pop out a bit already on newer tracks.

Pope: I'm into most kinds of punk, except for pop, emo, and rock 'n' roll. I love thrash and power violence shit. Stuff that's humorous, yet raw. Lately I've been into a lot of old Texas punk bands: Millions Of Dead Cops, D.R.I., Butthole Surfers, Big Boys, the Dicks. And, of course, the Melvins. The Melvins rule! Bring on the Melvins!

MRR: So tell the people reading this about Detroit, the barren wasteland we call home. What do you think of the scene and the kids here? Are there good times to be had amongst the rubble?

Jeff: Shit, Detroit hasn't been better in 10 years! When we started there were 10 kids coming to the shows. Now, there's anywhere from 60 to 100 fuckin' punks charged and spiked for battle! We've got so many bands popping up and so many more crust bands coming through on tour. It's recently been said that Detroit is the Portland of the Midwest. I wouldn't go that far, but if things continue, who knows? Some of our allies are Pub Life, who are Ex-Repulsion, Son of Sam, and Social Outcast. Filthy Death, who are exactly what there name sounds like, dirty fucking crust punk. Nomoreno are a complete Kuro rip-off and they rage. Blackout, Bump 'n' Uglies, Kneedeepinshit, and End Result, just to name a few more that completely rip!

Tim: Well, the first thing that I'd like to tell people about Detroit is that punk rock started here. The Stooges, MC5, and Alice Cooper were the prototype that McClaren and



all those bastards stole to create their "punk" bands in '75 and '76. So, with that outta the way, I would agree that Detroit's punk scene has been getting better. More bands, more show spaces, and more kids. Some new collectively-run record stores have popped up in the area, Idle Kids and State Control records. State Control has shows too. It's a little cramped, but a good atmosphere. Some other bands worthy of note that have hit the scene lately would be The Ratfinks, who play snotty street punk, Behead John Engler, who play a weird grindstyle, and Wartorn, who round out the new wave of Scandi-influenced bands around here. Some old Detroit favorites like AIDS and Life Set Struggle are still around, but not playing out as much for whatever reasons.

Pope: I personally think Detroit kinda sucks. I don't know what's wrong with kids today. There are some cool bands like the Bump 'n' Uglies and Pub Life, but it seems like shitty emo and pop punk bands get more of a response than the real crusty punk thrash bands. We still have a good following and it seems to be growing stronger. It usually takes a little time for kids to get into a brutal, more underground scene, like our own.

Tim: With all the attention Detroit's getting for being the garage rock capital of the world, and with Detroiters like Eminem, Kid Rock, the White Stripes, ICP, Andrew WK, and more becoming big stars, we hope to be next. We want to follow in Andrew WK's footsteps and be the next ones to come outta DIY punk and strike it big. I think he's the only artist ever to be on MTV that was in a band that put out a record on the MCR company, outta Japan. Ha ha. Unbelievable

MRR: How was tour? Any highlights?

Jeff: Tour was a great experience and a ton of fun for me! Thanks to everyone who helped us out with anything. Steve, our old bass player, burned the shit out of his feet while he was walking on hot pavement in Washington state. Sort of funny when it happened. That's what you get for wearing no shoes, damn hippie!

Tim: Tour was fun because every day brought another never-ending stream of fodder to make fun of Angry Steve for. Some of the highlights include knocking ice cream outta his hand, ditching him in Seattle, watching him break "the edge", hiding his cell phone so he couldn't talk to his girlfriend 24 hours a day, watching him cry 3 days into the tour because he missed his mom, and trying to duct tape him into his cocoon of a sleeping bag. The highlight for me as far as the shows we played would have to be Seattle. We had a gracious host, our exmember, Zanne, and she even came out and played a couple songs with us at the show. We also played that show with some great bands like Blown To Bits, Spitting Teeth and Warscars, who all were excellent people as well as excellent bands.

MRR: Now you seem to be part of a resurgence of the darker end of the hardcore punk spectrum. Your imagery reminds me of bands like Confuse, Discharge, and other darker spiky hairdo punx. Are you attempting to copy them, or to breathe new life into a dead art form? I say this amidst the biggest wave of so-called old school thrash bands, which is starting to resemble the "power violence" wave of years back. I am just curious how you feel about the possibility of starting a new trend, along with bands like Atrocious Madness, etc.

Jeff: I hardly think there's a resurgence of any wave of "darker" punk, in the States anyway. Maybe in Europe, or so it seems. I sure hope I am wrong, and that there is a upswing of the more serious social-political side of punk. All I know is when I go to a show I want to see punks, and not a bunch of kids that look like my brother. Let's bring back spiked hair, shaved heads, and fucking studded jackets! Punk is idealism, but it's also fashion.

Jaysklar: I wouldn't want to see people at fucking punk rock gigs that look like my brother either.

Tim: I have noticed a few bands that seem to fit into the category you described. It seems a lot of those bands are pretty incestuous and all come outta the Pacific Northwest. So I think that the resurgence that you speak of may be a bit of an illusion. I do think that many people are starting to realize that the opinions and arguments put forth by bands like Discharge, Confuse, Atrocious Madness, etc. have won an intellectual war. These bands dark depiction of our future have proven to be dead-on, as more people are finally starting to accept in the wake of September 11. This is why so many nonpunk bands want to play pop music and still call themselves punk; they want that credibility to hide behind. To all those people I say, "Stop flying the banner of punk or die!" I don't think that we will see a trend like we did with "power violence", because that whole thing was silly and stupid and a parody of itself. I think most people realized it was a joke, so forming a joke band to capitalize on the popularity was pretty easy to do. It seems that the kind of punk we play tends to draw the diehards. As much as we're influenced by bands before us, we also believe in what we do as a way of life. We have no choice but to play the kind of music we play, it's in our hearts, our heads, and every bone in our bodies.

Pope: I hope a trend starts! More kids around here need to buy records instead of NOFX CD's at the mall! Kids need to read the lyrics of DIY bands and feel the anger of punk. I definitely think more kids will start charging their hair and studding their jackets if they pull their heads out of the mainstream.

MRR: Tim recently wore a gas mask while you guys played live in Ann Arbor. Was this a reaction to the stench of some of your, shall we say, "hippie" fans?

Pope: The barrels are filled with acid, and we put live hippies into them before we play, so the stench can get pretty bad! We are at war with emo which explains the war paint.

Jeff: Nah, cause we probably smell just as bad or worse than the rest of them. After awhile, you grow immune to the stench of dirty punks. I personally like to add theatrics to a live performance. I enjoy playing out and I use it as a tool to be creative. To liven things up a bit, perhaps. We get asked all the time, "Why do you have a banner?" "What's up with the toxic waste barrels on stage?" "Why the war paint?"

Jaysklar: Studded and painted for fucking battle!

Tim: We were once called the Iron Maiden of Detroit for our "elaborate" stage show. I wish it was for our skilled musicianship, but alas. I wore the gas mask basically cause it looks fucking pissed. Also maybe someone at the show will put the banner (which says, "nuclear power=nuclear genocide"), the toxic waste barrels, and the gas masks together, and actually realize what a horrendous threat nuclear war still poses. We're bringing awareness through stage props, ha ha. Also, it's really funny when you look out at the pit and see kids throwing toxic waste barrels around and dancing on them.

MRR: You guys have a song where you go off about old punk bands doing reunions. Do you think that's always bad? The Subhumans went on tour not that long ago in the US; it seemed totally genuine.

Jeff: This is probably the song that we've gotten the most slack off of, and I find that quite amusing. If a band is getting back together and they're sincere then I have no problem with that. I say more power to you. But there's definitely a resurgence of bands reforming like BAD BRAINS who are an utter complete joke. Fuckin' give it up.

Tim: It's about the scores of bands who obviously are just trying to capitalize on the hardcore resurgence. These bands tarnish their legacy when they do this. Just leave it dead and buried. I will agree that the Subhumans tour seemed genuine, but, then again, did the Subhumans ever really break up? I mean with Citizen Fish and all they never left the punk scene. Do it right if your gonna do it and don't take advantage of kids. Don't disregard what your band means to the kids just because when you're 40 you feel a need to relive your teen years by playing half-filled 21 and over metal clubs.

Jeff: I just don't see why bands want to tarnish their legacy...whatever.

MRR: How are things going with the 7"? Is it selling well? What else is in the works? I know you just did a track for the benefit CD for Idle Kids, a DIY record, skate, and info shop in downtown Detroit. But what else is going on?

Jeff: The 7" has done very well. We were quite surprised that anyone would be interested in a crust punk record from the Midwest! It's almost gone out of print in a matter of six months, without any massive distribution. Jaysklar has really pushed the record and we are forever thankful to him for that. We also have a split LP, coming out in mid-winter '03 on Battlkry Records with Social Outcast, that was just recorded recently. We are going to have a release show for that and hopefully Social Outcast will play! A covers 7" will be out in early spring, and we have various compilation tracks coming out. We also will be touring the East Coast this winter.

Jaysklar: Yes, the split LP is going to kick your fucking brains in. The FOF side is more brutal than ever, and the Social Outcast side will definitely scar you. Their side was recorded back in '94, and it's some of their best stuff, I think. Their stuff was supposed to be on a split with Hellkrusher, that didn't happen, so here it is eight years later. Watch for it.

TIM : Yes, it is true. Social Outcast's side is really good shit that fucking blows the roof off of all their other releases. Expect a gatefold cover, and lots of extras, as well as some limited versions. Hopefully another EP of original songs will also be coming out around the same time as the covers EP.

Jeff: We'll definitely throw down some new tunes in early spring for another 7".

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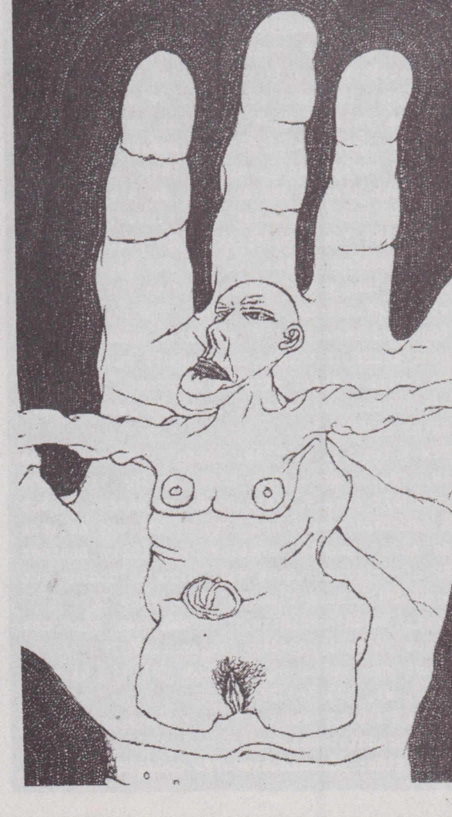
THE MASS DEBATE NEVER ENDS

THE RUDIMENTARY PENI STORY

BY LANCE HAHN



THE MAIN FACTORS WERE NICK'S ORIGINALITY, MY POLITICS, AND THE FACT THAT ALL THREE OF US COULD MAKE QUITE A SOUND WHEN WE PLAYED. THE "CULT" ASPECT IS ALSO A REFLECTION OF THE FACT THAT THERE WAS SOMETHING ABOUT OUR SOUND THAT WAS RARELY COMMERCIAL.- GRANT, BASSIST

No band from the anarcho punk scene has projected an image of mystery and mania like Rudimentary Peni. From the first note of "Media Person" to their most recent music, they've never released any music that's been short of completely unique: from musical approach, to the lyrics, to the bizarre and beautiful imagery that they're associated with.

Founding member, bassist, and (despite what many may think) writer of at least fifty percent of the band's material, Grant was just fifteen when the band came together. Having been exposed to punk like many in the country, he was sent on a course that would affect the rest of his life.

Grant, "As a teenager in Britain in 1977, it was impossible to avoid it. The impact of the Sex Pistols, The Clash, etc. was considerable at that time, and the media was full of it."

Meeting Nick Blinko through a friend, the two hit it off and decided to play music together. For drum duties, Nick brought in his old friend and band mate, Jon.

Grant, "I met Nick through a friend, and we "clicked" immediately. Jon and Nick had been at school together. Jon and Nick had played together in the Magits. Jon had also played for a band called Soft Drinks."

The Magits had been Nick's first serious band, releasing music in 1980. Having lost interest in that approach, Rudimentary Peni would start up within a year of the Magits demise.

Grant, "The Magits only put out one record. At that time, they were Nick and a friend of his. They were an avant-garde synthesizer band. They put the record out themselves as the first release on Outer Himalayan Records."

The Magits *Fully Coherent* 7" is a dark, almost gothic sounding band. With little relation to what they would be producing in Rudimentary Peni the following year, the record does give some insight to the haunting imagery that would become part of their identity. A second EP titled *A Pawn In The Game* was also recorded but never released.

Having seen Crass in 1979, Nick was well aware of them by the time Rudimentary Peni started playing and recording. But it was Grant who developed a general interest in the anarcho scene, which led to the band's connection to the Wapping Centre.

Grant, "In 1979 I bought *The Feeding of the 5000* and at a similar time Nick saw them live. We didn't really get into the scene until the winter of 1981 and the opening of the Autonomy Centre in East London. It was really me who was into that scene, more than the others."

Moving away from the more drastic experimental ideas of the Magits, Rudimentary Peni's musical approach was more deeply rooted in what was happening with punk at the time.

Grant, "Yes. Inspiration came from the first Damned album, and also a song called "The Bitch" by Slaughter and the Dogs, also the first two Discharge EPs and the first Wire album. There were many other influences, but these were the main ones, at least in the early days."

Selecting the band name was a seemingly random gesture determined by Grant's biology class.

Grant, "When I was at school studying biology, we were told that in the fetal stage the clitoris is a rudimentary penis. Then we had to dissect rabbit's testicles, at which point I fainted. For any deeper explanation you'd have to ask Freud."

Writing from the hip, the band's initial live set would determine the order of songs released on record. It was a direct process, not leaving room for disposable material.

Grant, "The early set was essentially the first EP plus some of the songs that eventually appeared on *Farce*. Songs called "Museum" and "Your Tribe" also come from the early days, and found their way onto later albums, though in a highly altered state. Not much got left behind."

Despite the common belief that Nick Blinko was the sole songwriter in the band, from the start, most of the music was a collaborative effort.

Grant, "In the early years, song writing was generally a combined effort, with one providing lyrics and another providing the riff. For example, "Media Person" was Nick's lyrics and my riff. Most of the lyrics on the first EP were Nick's, apart from "Blind Dogs" which was entirely written by me. The lyrics to "B Ward" were to some extent a co-write between Nick and myself.

Who writes what has varied tremendously over the years, however."

Throughout the band's existence, they didn't play many gigs. Even their first few gigs seemed random and varied.

Grant, "The first gig was a nerve-racking local affair. The second gig was a music competition, and we came in joint last. The third gig was in London with Flux of Pink Indians and the Subhumans. After that we did a series of gigs, mostly at anarcho-type venues in London, and these were some of the better ones. Gigs were extremely intense to do, so we didn't do many."

All the while the band was practicing and moving forward, Nick would also be working on his artwork that would become so popular.

Grant, "He would spend up to eight hours a day on art, and then we would practice songs in the evening. I would suggest that the artwork was inspired by Nick's sensitivity and his melancholy."

With the band taking shape, they soon embarked on recording their first EP but not without recording demo tapes first.

Grant, "Yes, and these early recordings are *crap*."

The band's first venture into the studio was the low budget excitement that characterizes so many great debut records.

Grant, "Thrilling and nerve-racking. The studio was a shit-hole, and that was all we could afford. When Nick came to do the vocals, I remember the hippy dude engineer turning to me in horror and saying, "he's just bawling into the mike"."

The band recorded most of their live set in order, or at least as much as would fit on a 7" record. Having finished the recording, Blinko finished the project with some of the most original cover art seen at that point. It's strange and unnerving line drawing cover on the one hand depicted alienation and decay with the image of a strange human-like form still developing in the womb. It's inhuman qualities make it's sequestered joy entirely otherworldly.

Grant, "I thought it was great, and perfectly suited. Great artwork. Crap recording quality. Great vocals."

Rather than even considering looking for a record label to release the EP, the band decided to put it out on Outer Himalayan, the name used to release the Magits EP.

Grant, "That's what bands did back then. It was a cheap, if rather limited, way of getting your stuff out there. As already stated, the label name was pre-existing, and was perhaps funny, avant-garde and perhaps transcendent."

The resulting record was as original as the cover art. Twelve songs crammed onto a little 7" record, the self-titled debut is a concise and perfectly arranged series of explosions shaped by fluid bass playing and tight drumming. The un-self-conscious approach to vocals lent itself to some totally unique sounds and expressions ranging from deep guttural tones to top of the range belts. The range of dementedly enjoyable vocals enhanced the also unique lyrical approach.

Grant, "Don't really know where Nick got

that early stuff from. I do remember him having a lot of arty books though, and reading things like Blake and Sylvia Plath."

The erupting bass line followed by the scream of feedback starts the record diving headlong into what may be the one of the greatest introductions to a band of all time, "Media Person."

Are you green to feel blue?
Is your vision purely golden?
Is your humor black or olden?
Do you find you're getting yellow?
Though you know you're in the red, dread, red.
I'm your media friend
Transparent so close friend
I'm your media friend
Around the clock religion

With the lyrics spat out like machine gun fire, the song could be interpreted as both Nietzschean and existential. Though often inadvertently cross-referencing pop and avant-garde ideas, the lyrics were hardly vague, but rather coming from a clearly different perspective. If there ever were hints in the words of the first EP that they were ideologically aligned with Crass and the anarcho scene (other than the obvious gigs shared) it would be in the song "Blind Dogs."

Grant, "I had political leanings before the relationship with Crass, as shown by "Blind Dogs." We always fought shy of calling ourselves an anarcho band though my idealism didn't extend quite that far."

The unseeing eyes of the blinded pupils
Unseeing guidance, the lead of the blind dogs
Token gestures from life long investors
Questions only for those who question
A vicious circle of passive acceptance
Passive acceptance of a vicious circle
Prevention by convention of infantile dissention
Creates a self-sufficient form of self oppression

Despite what problems the band may have had with the production values on the first EP, it remains (along with the bands first full length) one of the most impressive and unique documents to come, albeit inadvertently, from the UK anarcho scene. There were so many ways to be initially affected by this record. Whether it's the unique approach to songwriting, the mystifying artwork or simply, the relentlessness of the songs, the record definitely made Rudimentary Peni a band to watch out for. People around the world were now showing interest and friends also expressed excitement over the EP.

Grant, "Yes. People on the scene who we played it to, generally said it was brilliant and excellent."

But with all this interest coming from all corners, the above ground music media were completely oblivious.

Grant, "No reviews in the music press, but we never sent them a copy any way."

The band never would completely see the scope of their progress, nor were they that interested. In their entire history, they never really toured to promote anything, the release of their debut EP was only followed by a smattering of gigs.

Around the time of the record's release, Grant had by then become much more interested in Crass. When a friend decided to go up to their house for an interview, Grant tagged along bringing a copy of the freshly released Rudimentary Peni document.

Grant, "I went down to Crass' house in the summer of 1981 with someone who was interviewing them. I took along a copy of the first EP, and on hearing it Penny Rimbaud offered us the chance to do a 7" on the Crass label. We decided to do the second EP on the Crass label partly because I was heavily into Crass at that time, and partly because we knew it was a chance to reach a wider audience without being ripped off by a shitty "indie" label."

This new connection with Crass brought the band soon into the studio again but this time under more appropriate circumstances. Like most of the Crass Records recordings, the *Farce* EP was recorded at Southern Studios with Penny Rimbaud producing and John Loder twisting the knobs.

Grant, "For me, it was the most exhilarating recording experience that I've had. However, Penny's production style did tend to inhibit Nick's vocal performance. As someone who was 17 at the time, I remember thinking that Penny seemed a lot more easy to be around than many other "older" dudes."

Farce was a perfect eleven songs of raw punk rock that sated most people's appetites created by the band's debut. With only a slight shift in the group's songwriting dynamic ("Slightly more than half the lyrics were mine, whilst riffs came from both me and Nick", Grant) the group was still heading forward with a much more conducing studio environment. While the vocals were quite a bit different than any other Rudimentary Peni release, the overall sound certainly benefited from a more sympathetic ear at the controls.

Grant, "Penny assisted with studio production and mixing. I think Crass did the layout of the artwork, but they did not seek to alter or censor anything that we did. Their only requirement was that the front cover should have that recognizable circular stenciled effect."

With the influence of Grant's lyric writing more than Crass' presence, there are a few more direct attacks in the lyrics against an oppressive society, the most obvious being in the first track on side one, "Sacrifice," another moment of sheer brilliance with a simple guitar riff launching the whole record.

God is nothing more than an obsessive lie
When Sunday school children are brainwashed into line
And presented with as truth what's really just a lie
Another child's self-belief is sacrificed
In the eyes of the lord men are his servants
In the eyes of the lord women are men's servants
In the eyes of the lord we're authority's servants
In the eyes of the lord everyone's a servant

But possibly the most telling song on the record is one of truly existential despair called "Zero Again." Whereas the other songs on the record to differing degrees could be interpreted in some outward, sometimes political context, "Zero Again" was clearly about a more personal despair.

The end of the line where zero's the sign
A hole in the mind deaf, dumb and blind
Nothing to cry not even an eye
Zero again the end of no end
A vacant space lacks a familiar face
An unknown face finds a vacant space
The memory killed by a hole soon filled
Zero again there remain no remains
Death has begun
And Jesus loves no one

With this second release, even more people were starting to take notice. Again without the benefit of a tour, the band was noticing interest from people who had never even seen them play live.

Grant, "The audience liked it and the music press described it as "surprisingly good." It climbed the indie chart, which the first EP did not, and we got a lot of appreciative mail."

Under the wing of Crass and with their distribution, the band were more and more a part of the growing anarcho scene that Grant had been interested in since the development of the Wapping Anarchy Centre.

Grant, "We liked the Mob, Rubella Ballet and the Erratics. Above all, however, I thought the Sinyx were awesome, and on a good night they could kick all our butts. I still think their style and chord structures are some of the best that punk has to offer inspired simplicity."

To be free from the necessity of touring, and also to keep the band from being their life's framework, the three members still continued to have outside lives.

Grant, "Some worked, some did art and I was at school."

But it was in the middle of this success that the band suffered one of its worst setbacks and personal tragedies when Grant was diagnosed with cancer. The news came while writing songs for what would be their debut full-length.

Grant, "It was cancer. I fought hard and survived. That's all I can say really, except that I've never been able to shake off the sense of mortality since."

Despite playing down the seriousness of the situation, Grant and Nick's songwriting must have been affected by the situation. While some songs remained from the early days, others were written in the midst of Grant's fight.

Grant, "Whilst writing some of it, I was going through the fight for survival, at least one of the songs on that album was written by me whilst sitting in a cancer ward wired up to a drip. Other tracks go back to the *Farce* era, such as "Inside" and "Dutchmen"."

By the time the band were in the studio recording the record, they decided to call it quits for the first time. Not knowing that this would become almost cyclical for them, it was not a happy time.

Grant, "By this time the band had split up, so it was all a bit of a downer. About two months earlier I had just recovered from cancer, and so was no longer quite the same naive youth of the previous year. It was quite interesting and rewarding to do, but no longer exhilarating. Doing our own production enabled Nick to return to a less restricted vocal style."

With this in mind, the two main songwriters were matched in their lyrics in terms of dark themes and perfect musical accompaniment. One of the great aspects of Rudimentary Peni's delivery, especially on their first album, is their combining existential horror with barely contained anger. Most other punk bands of the time were clearly working in one direction or the other. Rudimentary Peni's unique approach was largely due to the unexpected high-energy approach to what would otherwise seem like depressed landscapes of futility.

The resulting album was called *Death Church* ("Don't know. That was Nick's idea," Grant) and was the most complete expression of the band as an egalitarian unit.

Grant, "It was the usual mixture of Nick and I. Of all the things we have recorded, I would say that *Death Church* is the most democratic, in the sense that it does not come across as being more Nick's project or mine. People think that they can detect which songs were written by me and which were written by Nick, but when tested they often get it wrong, which is interesting."

Death Church is certainly

one of the most unique (and most popular) records associated with the anarcho punk scene. The song-writing somehow seems completely unique and interesting, while at the same time concise and almost minimal. Recorded and mixed in a mere four days, the record gives no hint at cheap production values as the recorded tracks even stand up today.

Unusually haunting, minimalist imagery runs through much of the lyrics starting with the opening mantra of "1/4 Dead."

3/4 of the world are starving
The rest are dead
Overdosed on insensitivity
Nail varnished to crosses

The lyrics are often completely given to the imagistic with its navigation in the paranoid and alienated.

The black cloud gathers and smothers my brain
As I cry another tear in this struggle of pain
Another hurdle to clear is it all the same?
Is the conquest of pain my only aim?
As you walk out of the Valium of death
A sad feeling limps around your brain
Funny farmer sowing seeds of discontent
Pumping nerve gas around unfeeling veins
War junkies perish in the wreckage of their brains
Mindwarp earthlings seek to change our path
Stench crawling over the snow
Bilious bodies terrorized by fast-food sugar demons
Unhappy nuclear bomb doubt families
Meltdown in the melting tin pot-boilers
Another crutch splinters and snaps
Time to heal the split atoms now
Happy farm

Other lyrics saw the band taking more direct approaches to political oriented songs while maintaining their unique approach.

I tell you about the animals
How they suffer how they die
You try to hide guilty doubt
From me with an appeasing smile
You never want responsibility
For this murderous cruelty
The wasteful piles of blood soaked bodies
You wont let your conscience see

Blasphemy squad
Thriving on hate
In the warfare state
Like piss in a pod

1902 inside a British concentration camp
Where 20,000 Dutchmen including children die
Do you feel any pity for these murdered men and women
Who died at the hands of the British Empire
Victims they may have been
But innocent they were not
They were murderers just the same
With their own code of hate

The initial pressing of the record would also include an insert further explaining some of the more issue oriented lyrics as well as info on the Autonomy Centre that Grant was involved with and contact info for feminist and vegan organizations.

Grant, "Yes. For me music had become to some extent a vehicle for political sentiments, so the two were not separate. I think Nick and Jon just thought the political thing was a load of crap really, and found my ranting and raving both funny and insufferable."

The record was released to great commercial and critical success. To this day, it's considered by many to be a classic record above and beyond the context of punk rock much less the anarchist scene.

Grant, "The music press liked it, and it made it to number one in the indie chart in the summer of 1983. I think some fans found it rather heavy going, which is how it was meant to be."

But even with that success, the band had decided to split before even recording *Death Church*. Surviving more than just a brush with death forced Grant to reevaluate what he was doing and the band dissolved.

Over the next few years, Grant and Nick wouldn't even see each other. During that time, Nick contributed artwork to records by Part 1, Icons Of Filth, and eventually Septic Death. It was also at this point that Nick would write the bulk of his semi-autobiographical novel, *Primal Screamer*. Written in the third person from the perspective of an analyst observing Nick, the content runs from the completely insular, to the outrageous and hilarious.

Grant, "It is a strange mixture of fact, fantasy and fiction. Some of it, I liked. Some of it was too surreal for me. That book was written in the mid 1980s during a five year period when we were not in contact at all."

The only one of the three making music was drummer Jon who played with the band Snakecore, with no known releases.

By 1987, even Crass had been split up for a few years. As a result, they were deleting much of their 7" catalog and it was suggested that the two Rudimentary Peni EPs be kept in print as a single full-length record. Initially released on Crass' Corpus Christi imprint, the full-length reissue was essentially even to those with the original records for the impressive Blinko cover art.

Grant, "Southern had taken over distribution of our first EP even before "Farce" was recorded, so there was always a lot of flexibility under the Southern umbrella. It was only ever our intention to do one record on Crass in order to reach a wider audience before reclaiming full control over production. Some bands have expressed mixed feelings about working with Crass records, but I have nothing but praise and gratitude for what they did for us. They were a help and certainly not a hindrance in my opinion."

With the band members back in touch, Rudimentary Peni would surprise the world by ending the decade releasing their second full length LP, *Cacophony*. Shocking alone that the band were back together (though their shroud of mystery made many in the States unaware of their split up in the first place), the record was even more eclectic musically and content-wise.

Straight ahead punk riffs were countered by totally non-linear lyric writing. Repetition as a device was challenged by fast tempos. Non-musical interludes took the listener out of the standard "rock band" context.

Lyrically, Nick was mostly responsible this time around displaying his fascination with HP Lovecraft. In fact, most of the lyrics on the record are either in reference to Lovecraft's writing or in some way biographical.

Tis better in ignorance to dwell
Than to go screaming into the abyss worse than hell
But all these messages have been in vain
From the little glass bottle to the call of the Cthulhu

Howard Phillips Lovecraft
Heaven knows had a talent for writing
Which was of no mean proportion
Only what he did with his talent was a shame
And a caution and an eldritch horror
If he had only gotten the hell out of his Auntie's attic
And obtained a job with the Federal Writers Project of the WPA
He could have turned out guide-books
That would have been classics and joys to read, forever

If only briefly, there is

even a reference to Grant's illness from almost a decade previous.

Cancer of the colon and rectum
A very common form of cancer
Which can often be cured by surgical removal
Provided it is caught early enough
Hmmmm
Carcinoma of the intestines chronic nephritis

Grant, "The entire album was written and rehearsed within three months. The lyrics were essentially Nick's, whilst a lot of riffs and ideas were contributed by me. I had got into Beethoven, Handel, etc. by that point."

Hindsight gives the main riff-writer a more critical opinion on the merits of the record.

Grant, "I've never really seen it that way. It's a strange record in terms of its overall sound, but its structures are really quite conventional. Perhaps it's the presence of classical elements that makes you describe it in the way that you have. I personally think the first half of it is quite impressive at times, whereas the second half sucks."

More freedom in the studio only meant more mania as it was a grim time for Grant. The atmosphere resulted in some especially unsettling vocal performances by Nick further removed from any singer heard before.

Grant, "It was cold. I was in the middle of a relationship break-up and the coldness of the studio just served to emphasize the grimness for me. Nick's vocal performances were genuinely rather unsettling at times."

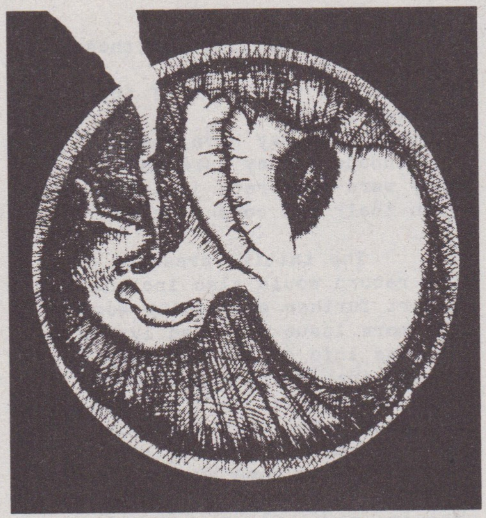
In the process of making a record that was even more conceptual than their previous recordings, the effort to create a cerebral effect didn't necessarily make a record at all accessible.

Grant, "I think it was Kerrang magazine who loved it, but called it "commercial suicide." They were right about that. Of everything we've done, *Cacophony* has been the worst seller."

An absolutely fascinating record, it's possible that the perceived discordance of the record could have provided some sort of indication as to the problems Nick would have in the years to come.

Grant, "There was something rather deliberately arty about it. If *Farce* can be said to bear the stamp of my personality, then *Cacophony* can be said to represent more of Nick's approach to what we do."

Though the band had no



plans after the release of *Cacophony* (the band hadn't even planned on playing live again), any even distant possibilities would take a backseat as Nick was diagnosed as delusional resulting in him being "detained under Section Three of the 1983 Mental Health Act."

Grant, "Yes, Nick had terrible problems during the first half of the 1990s, though things have seemed to stabilized since then."

Understandably hesitant to say much to Nick's illness, suffice it to say that it did play a big part in what would eventually be the band's next record, at this point his delusions are under control.

Grant, "Nothing to add on this point, except to say that I have known Nick for over 20 years, and throughout that period he has been one of the most perceptive people I have ever encountered, particularly when it comes to the question of human motivations."

During the beginning of Nick's illness and the band's second split, Grant and Jon were contacted by Steve Albini about a possible recording project. While Grant and Jon's parts were recorded, the session remains incomplete with the tapes still in Albini's possession.

By the mid-90s, Nick had decided to start writing about his delusions wanting to "profit artistically" from those experiences in particular believing he was a Pope, hence the 1995 LP, *Pope Adrian 37th*.

Grant, "Pope Adrian was the only ever English Pope, who lived many hundreds of years ago and came from the village where Nick lives. To be a Pope at that time was the equivalent of being a Roman or Chinese emperor, or in the present day, the president of the US, i.e. a politically significant dude. The whole concept was bound up with delusions that Nick had suffered during a breakdown. There does seem to be a tendency to have certain themes with each record, though this was not always the intention."

The music was a more accessible path of riff heavy punk with some of the musical ideas going back before the start of the band.

Grant, "It was just another session. I don't have many particular memories of it, except that Jon said at the end of the session that he didn't think the songs were that good. The riffs were written over a long period of time. In fact, one of the riffs went back as far as the early Magits days."

This venture into the studio would be the least popular amongst band members despite the fascinating subject matter. The band mostly felt like the musical material wasn't up to snuff. In many ways, it was a huge departure from *Cacophony* as it brought the band back to more straightforward hardcore punk. Some reviewers even referred to the songs as metal influenced as absurd as that seems now.

Grant, "Jon and I thought the record was *crap*, as did Southern Studios. None of us wanted to release it, except Nick, so in the interests of open-mindedness we opted to release it anyway. I personally still think its crap, but it sells better than *Cacophony* explain that if you can! It's worth remembering of course that at the time of their release, every record we've done has been considered crap by somebody or other."

If anything, the music is an oversimplification of the band. Lyrically, it's still propelling with nothing but curious ramblings and dramatics.

It's such a shame the Pope with no name
She doesn't know what she's called
Closure confusion it's so sad
Delusions of grandeur she must be mad
One day my head will grow
Into a mighty Papal dome shape
I shall awake old mitre man

For the first time ever, the band decided to tour to support the record. With slight financial incentives, the band toured the UK ending in what would be their final live performances ever.

Grant, "Some of the gigs were the pits. One in particular was one of the worst we ever did. Others were OK, whilst the gig we did in Derby had an incredible atmosphere, with people screaming stuff at us like "You're fucking brilliant!" Some people who turned

up late at that gig and missed our set trashed the place. One of the other gigs suffered a power failure moments before we went on. Chaos ensued, and the management was so disgusted with our fans that they banned us from ever playing there again. We thought we would try gigging again, partly to promote the record, but also because it had become economically viable, unlike the early days when it would usually end up costing us money."

Unhappy with the record they were supporting, the band seemed to go back into another six-year hibernation. But with a new interest in songwriting, Grant decided to get the band going again, more active now than since their earliest days. While not expecting to ever play live again, the band has released a relatively steady stream of music. 1998 brought the EP, *Echoes Of Anguish*.

Grant, "I think we were so pissed off with the aforementioned indifference that we lost enthusiasm again for a long while. *Echoes of Anguish* was my project, entirely written by me. I decided it was time to take the band and give it a kick up its fat middle-aged backside. As part of that, I decided to write small amounts of material over a period of at least two years, if not more, and to weed out any crap, so that what found its way onto the record was only the very best I could write at that time."

Getting back to their early style, the recording this time was very quick.

Grant, "It was good a kind of controlled intensity. We had a different engineer, who did a good job, and we took about three days in total to record and mix it. It was a response, in the sense that it was an attempt to get back to basics to study some of the more progressive aspects of *Death Church* and *Farce*, and attempt to improve on them. In other words, it was more of a reference to our own stuff than anything else."

With a return to the style of their *Farce* era material, the lyrics are also a return to what most people think of when they think of Rudimentary Peni's style.

What is this that burns
Through every cell
And every fibre of being?
Divine decay
Pure and infernal
The flame of insanity

Grant, "The bleak message is my attempt to describe as accurately as possible the reality of human existence, i.e. the fact that it is suffering covered with a thin veneer of lies."

In 2001, the band released the follow-up to *Echoes Of Anguish* titled *The Underclass*.

Grant, "It was an attempt to study some of the more progressive aspects of *Echoes of Anguish*, and attempt to improve on them. We had already planned to do another EP after *Echoes*. It was just a matter of taking a couple of years to do the best we could. Again, *The Underclass* was entirely written by me."

With some well-deserved stability and a freshness to the songwriting, the band may be totally enjoying themselves for the first time.

Grant, "It was good. We used the same engineer as last time, and we had got more used to each other by then. Personally, I think *The Underclass* is the best thing we've done to date."

Having said that, the band to this day feels no affinity with the current generation of anarcho punks. In fact, the band no longer holds importance with politics as being part of their identity.

Grant, "Nick and Jon never did. I no longer see music as a serious vehicle for political discussion. I have also come to feel that when there is a tension between the desires of the individual and the wider agenda of social justice, the individual must give way. Real revolutionary politics is Lenin or Mao, not rock music. I would concede, however, that music sometimes can start the process of a person's politicization. However, it cannot complete it."

The band functions without any connection to the anarcho scene today.

Grant, "None whatsoever. All that matters is to improve the songs, describe reality, and try to give a bit of depth to the lyrics. You could also argue that the existence of this band does at least amount to a few misfits finding some sort of public voice."

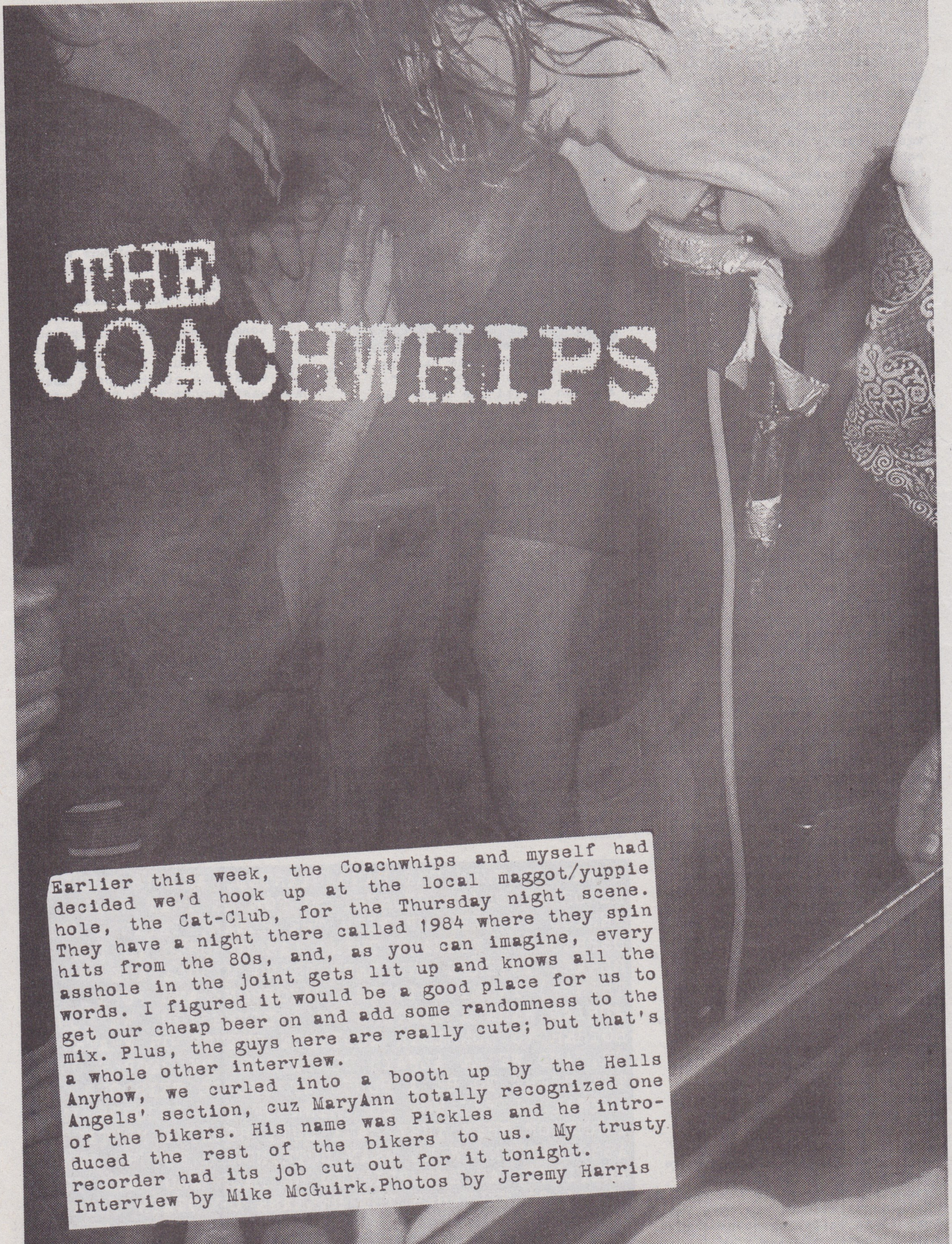
That's not to say that they at all relate to any other music that goes by the name "punk" these days.

Grant, "90s punk is crap. It has soft jangly bits in it to make it easy for the listeners. Either that or it sounds like heavy metal. The last decent punk record was The Sinyx *Black Death* EP from 1982. Although the vocals on much of this record are too soft, the track called "Zulu" goes some way to capturing that band's greatness. In other words, we didn't relate to the 90s scene. We just did what we wanted to do."

As I write this, the band is recording a new record tentatively titled *Archaic*. Nick is back to contributing to the songwriting and the band have a positive attitude about it. With the band pushing forward, Grant isn't ultimately too interested in going down memory lane.

I WAS 15 WHEN THE BAND STARTED, AND 18 WHEN WE RECORDED *DEATH CHURCH*, SO FOR ME THAT WHOLE PERIOD IS TIED UP WITH THE BLEAK, INTENSE AND DEPRESSING TEENAGE THING (AS OPPOSED TO THE BLEAK, INTENSE AND DEPRESSING MIDDLE AGE THING!) IN MY OPINION, *CACOPHONY* AND *POPE ADRIAN* WERE A MISTAKE OR A DIVERSION. WE DON'T BOTHER TO CONSIDER AUDIENCE TRENDS OR WHATEVER, AND WE'RE ALWAYS CONSIDERED BY PEOPLE ON THE SCENE TO BE A BUNCH OF UNCOOL WEIRDOES ANYWAY. I TRY NOT TO THINK OF THE RECORDS IN TERMS OF WHEN THEY CAME OUT, BECAUSE NOSTALGIC ASSOCIATIONS WILL MEAN NOTHING TO FUTURE GENERATIONS, AS EXEMPLIFIED BY FANS WHO WERE TOO YOUNG TO REMEMBER THE RELEASE OF *DEATH CHURCH*, AND TO WHOM THE EARLY 80S ANARCHO SCENE MEANS NOTHING. - GRANT

THE COACHWHIPS



Earlier this week, the Coachwhips and myself had decided we'd hook up at the local maggot/yuppie hole, the Cat-Club, for the Thursday night scene. They have a night there called 1984 where they spin hits from the 80s, and, as you can imagine, every asshole in the joint gets lit up and knows all the words. I figured it would be a good place for us to get our cheap beer on and add some randomness to the mix. Plus, the guys here are really cute; but that's a whole other interview.

Anyhow, we curled into a booth up by the Hells Angels' section, cuz MaryAnn totally recognized one of the bikers. His name was Pickles and he introduced the rest of the bikers to us. My trusty recorder had its job cut out for it tonight.

Interview by Mike McGuirk. Photos by Jeremy Harris

MRR: So how's the San Francisco music scene these days?

John Harlow: You know, it's like, well-we're like, pretty into it.

MaryAnn: Well, I like to dance and drink some, and the scene here provides a great atmosphere for me to fulfill all of my urges.

John Dwyer: It's true; I've seen MaryAnn drink and I've heard about her urges. It hurts my soul to think of the things she's done for the sake of fun.

MRR: Any bands in the SF area that you wish were still around? From the old days, I mean?

MaryAnn: I loved the Skin Rabblers; nobody knew who they were, but they really fucked shit up.

John Harlow: Chain Mail, they ruled.

John Dwyer: Remember Numbers? Whatever happened to those guys?

MRR: You guys seem to wanna tour a lot. What's your favorite part of that scene?

John Harlow: Sleeping in the back of the Honda, wrapped in the American flag, no pants, fighting to survive.

MaryAnn: All the different truck-stops and bars and beers across the land-vodka too-

John Dwyer: Touring really opens up my inner chonee. I can step back from my day-to-day routine and say, "Hey, where the hell am I and where is my wallet?"

MRR: Any wild tales of rock 'n' roll excess you want to share?

John Harlow: We don't really party when we're on the road. We like to keep everything low key. MaryAnn would be the one to ask.

MaryAnn: We got to ride in the ZZ Top car! You know the one from *Eliminator*?

MRR: No Shit! How did that happen?

Just as she's about to answer my question, a loud scream, quickly followed by a loud "Fuck!" from across the room, captures everyone's attention (especially the Hell's Angels, who in unison, stand up to see what discord is threatening the vibe at their chosen hangout spot). Apparently an altercation at the bar has lead to a typical SF denizen getting a Lemon Drop thrown in his face. To my horror, the man (who almost inconceivably has a substantial piece of toilet paper stuck to his tie) stumbles in our direction. A drunken mess, the bar room wonder seems to fall to the ground, but he has actually executed a fairly acrobatic limbo move, avoiding the outstretched hands of someone doing the "waiter dance" to The Cure's seminal hit "Why Can't I Be You". As he gets closer, it becomes obvious he's headed straight for us. I quickly turn back to MaryAnn to get the scoop on the ZZ Top story. To my dismay , the man sits down with us and raises his Gin Fizz for a toast. I can tell it's going to be one of those nights.

The Hell's Angels and the Coachwhips have both placidly accepted the fact that this strange man has joined us at the table, so I turn to one of the Angels and inquire about the identity of our uninvited guest. "Emilio Estevez," the biker says flatly, but MaryAnn smacks the biker on the arm and shouts out.

MaryAnn: It's Judd Nelson, Pickles.

Judd Nelson: Cheers!

All: Cheers!

At this point I must note that Judd Nelson toasts so hard that he spills most of the contents of his drink on my recorder and MaryAnn.

Judd: What the hell is going on here-what the fuck is this?

Judd grabs at my recorder and I grab back at it.

MRR: Hey hey hey-that's my asshole detector, it's off the seal right now. I'm trying to interview these guys.

Judd Nelson: For what? Who are you guys?

MaryAnn: The Coachwhips.

Judd Nelson: The Couchlips?

All: The Coachwhips!

Judd Nelson: Whatever, interviews are bullshit, man. I mean, I'll do them if it's in the fucking contract, but when I'm out, it's my time! It's Judd time!

Judd Nelson: What kind of music do you guys play?

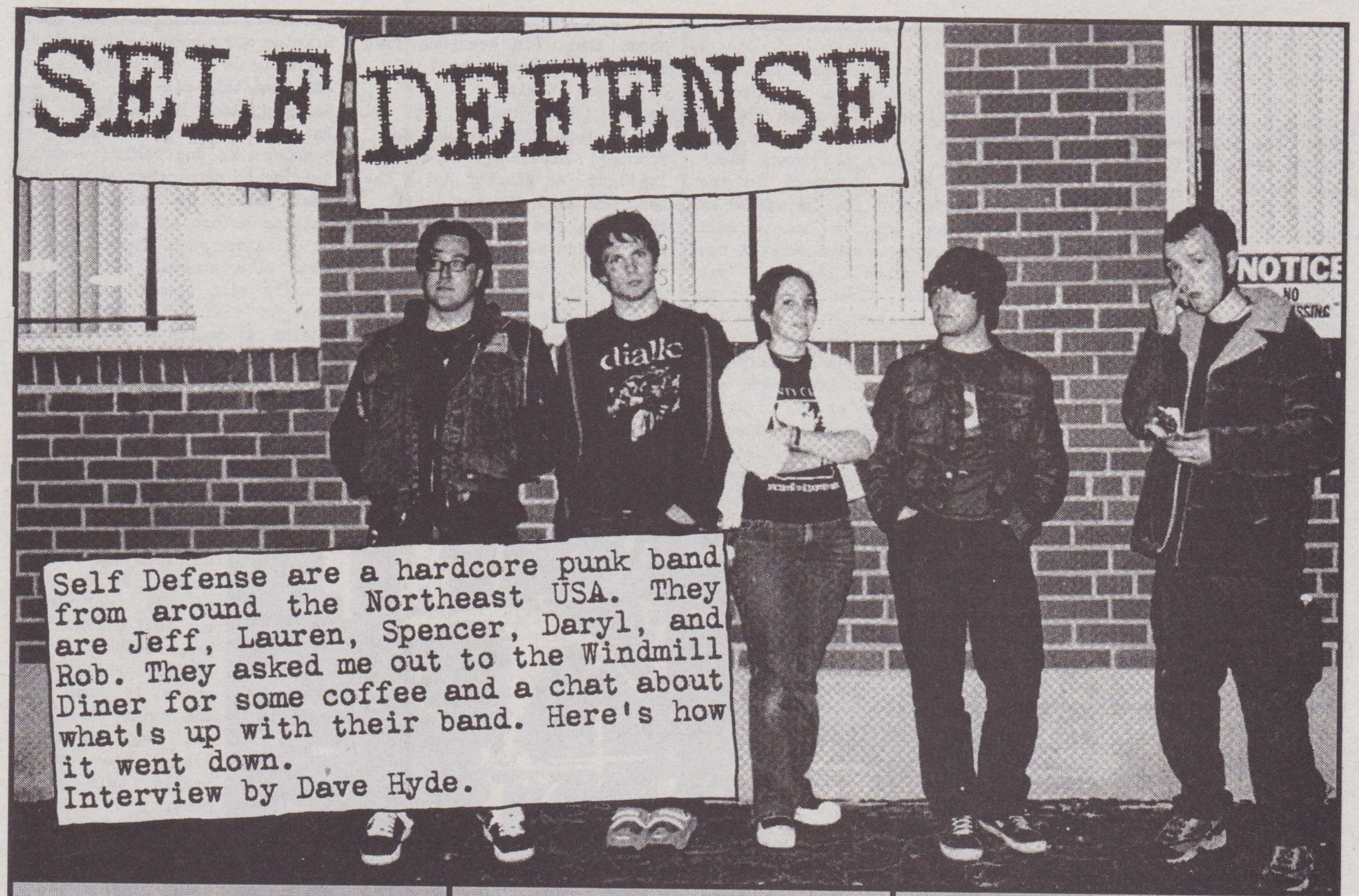
John Harlow: It's well-you know-"patty rock"? A kind of old school rock. You know, party music.

Judd Nelson: You're goddamned right I know party music! But my question to you is why the fuck are

they playing the fucking Eurythmics in here? Nobody ever partied to the Eurythmics, not even back in the day, and I don't want to be the first.
John Dwyer: Amen to that!
Judd turns his attention to MaryAnn.
MaryAnn: I just noticed that you weren't wearing a shirt.
Judd Nelson: Shirt, shmirt. Who needs 'em, right?
MaryAnn realizes, I think, that she is in his cross hairs and smartly removes herself.
MaryAnn: I'm going to get another Boiler Maker. Anyone?
All: No, no.
Judd Nelson: I've got a better party in my pocket, fuck a Boiler Maker. Who wants a little toot?
All eyes were on Judd's pocket, suddenly. But since I have been clean and serene for, like, eight years, I had to decline the offer. I'm the only square in the circle, apparently, as MaryAnn and both Johns lean in for the kill.
Judd Nelson: All right, these are gonna be wild rails here. I hope you guys can handle it.
I once again try to restart my interview.
MRR: So tell me about this ZZ Top thing. Did they show you the *Elkninator* space shuttle too?
MaryAnn: Huh? Space shuttle? I don't know what you're talking about.
John Harlow hands Dwyer a silver straw.
John Harlow: You're up.
John Dwyer: He means like on the *Velero Fly* album? Or what was that thing called?
John Harlow: I think that was just a drawing.
Judd Nelson: Here comes the Judd! Here comes the Judd! Everybody know that I am the Judd!
Just as Judd's rallying cry starts to fade from the aural landscape of The Cat Club, George Chen walks in on one of the drunken booty calls that have sadly become commonplace in the SF rock scene.
George Chen: Who wants to party

with a rock star!
Nelson hits the deck as if someone has lobbed a grenade into the club.
Judd Nelson: Is that Anthony Michael Hall? Don't let him see me.
John Harlow: It's not Anthony Michael Hall. Get back up, dude.
Judd Nelson: Fuck, I nearly had a heart attack. I hate that guy.
John Harlow. George Chen-
Judd Nelson: Anthony Michael Hall!
At this point I begin to realize that I'm not going to get what I came here for, so the reporter in me begs me to take over.
MRR: What do you mean you hate Anthony Michael Hall? I thought you guys were bros. Weren't you in the Brat Pack or something?
Judd Nelson: Anthony Michael Hall was never in the goddamned Brat Pack, asshole! He was too young. And, besides, ever since his role in *Weird Science* he thinks he's The Shit.
Just then the DJ, seemingly noticing Nelson's presence, puts on the Simple Minds song, "Don't You Forget About Me".
Judd comes up from Scarface-sized rail number three, and a hint of clarity passes over his coke-covered face.
Judd Nelson: What the fuck-this is my tune! Get up! Get up!
Everyone gets up as if to hit dance floor with him, but when he turns to do the freak we all return to our seats.
MaryAnn: Oh my god, check it out. He's totally picking up Chen and carrying him around the dance floor.
MRR: OK, I don't mean to be wet blanket, but can we get the fuck out of here before you-know-who comes back.
John Dwyer: George?
MRR: No, Judd. I can't take another serving.
Even though Judd had the blow, I managed to scrape up the gang and hit the high road.. We were out front and getting ready to split when we had the privilege of seeing both Nelson and Chen being forcefully removed from the Cat Club...so ends another night on the SF scene. Nothing got accomplished but I am pretty sure I had a good time and I have a good story to tell. I was the only one who didn't throw up on the cab ride home.
coachwhips@hotmail.com

SELF DEFENSE



Self Defense are a hardcore punk band from around the Northeast USA. They are Jeff, Lauren, Spencer, Daryl, and Rob. They asked me out to the Windmill Diner for some coffee and a chat about what's up with their band. Here's how it went down.
Interview by Dave Hyde.

Jeff: You're gonna edit this so we sound lucid, right?

MRR: I'm going to make you look smart if you can't do it yourselves. You're probably one of the only bands to ever use the word 'jurisprudence' in a song.

Lauren: Bad Religion totally had to. Actually, I'm almost positive they have.

Jeff: But that's not where I got the idea. I mean, it's the way I talk normally, and it rhymes.

MRR: All right, Self Defense has been around for a while–

Jeff: What's the definition of a while?

Lauren: Two years.

MRR: –and the lineup now is remarkably different from the lineup at first. So give a short history of the lineups.

Spencer: Basically me and Chris thought we should make a thrash band. Remember that band Anathema that I was in and how he started playing drums? We were gonna call the band Closed Casket Funeral. We had all these songs, and then Lauren came in.

Spencer: So it was us three and we got this dude, Jon, to come sing for us.

Lauren: Who Chris met at Trash (Trash American Style is the local punk record store in Danbury, CT that Chris used to work at).

Spencer: We wrote a couple songs and played with him for a while, then some shit went down and he ended up out of the band. Jeff came and sang for us, and we're like, "He's good enough, I guess." That was after we recorded the demo with Al and had already played a bunch of shows. After tour Chris left. We got Rob to replace him, and Daryl on guitar.

Jeff: We'd always wanted a second guitar player, but for some reason under the previous lineup no one wanted to do it, and Daryl has the fire to play.

MRR: I guess what I'm curious about is, you've had three pretty distinct lineups–has it always been the same people writing all the songs?

Lauren: The three of us are always involved.

Spencer: The first demo was half Lauren, half me, same thing with the 7".

Lauren: At this point it's more evenly split between the three of us writing guitar parts.

Spencer: Since I'm in Boston, I'm not there for the practices most of the time. Yesterday I brought a new song to practice. We also have Rob who plays guitar.

MRR: Will he be writing stuff, too?

Jeff: Not really.

Spencer: But he'll tell me what he thinks will sound good, and I'll do it and it usually sounds good, so it works out well.

Jeff: He's a pretty solid musical base, so he knows which chords to switch to to mix it up.

Spencer: I think Daryl's an actual guitar player.

Jeff: He's actually a bass player. He's only been playing guitar for two weeks.

Spencer: Really? Well, he does pretty well.

MRR: Listening to the songs, I notice there's a lot of start/stopping and tempo changes, stuff like that. What sort of stuff is inspiring you to write songs like that, that aren't just straightforward, that have little extras, changes and all that?

Jeff: We don't do the start/stop thing anymore. That sort of developed out of necessity if you know what I mean. We lacked the ability to translate time signatures and speeds smoothly. We had a lot of trouble with switching speeds, so usually we'd just stop and start…the amateur approach, but Rob's got a really good rhythmic head on his shoulders.

Lauren: We're also bored with songs that are really straightforward.

Jeff: I don't give any extra credence to originality 'cause that's the last thing a hardcore band needs, but we're trying to write good songs. The best songs could be played a hundred different ways. You could take a good punk rock song and turn it into a pop song and put it on the radio or you could ratchet it up and have it be a good hardcore song. The Stiphnoyds song is like the perfect song that works–

MRR: Which one, "Afraid of the Russians"?

Jeff: No, not that one, "Mom's a Fake".

MRR: "Mom's a Fake" is a Sabbath song; it's the riff to "Paranoid".

Jeff: That's obvious; it's also a Wipers song. But you could definitely turn that up triple time and it'd be perfect. I always wanted to do "Tragedy" by the Wipers. That's another one I think would be good to do a bunch of different ways.

MRR: You're a nice guy, but your vocals are really tough. You're hiding something. There's some pent-up anger here.

Jeff: I'm definitely mad at the world.

MRR: You're a college dropout.

Jeff: Career temp.

MRR: What's raging in you?

Jeff: The white middle class fury burns in my heart. I don't know, I'm trying to be aware of the world around me. If you're not mad there's something wrong with you. You've deluded yourself if you think everything's great. I'd like to think we're doing things the way they should be done. Which is with unbridled commitment to what we're doing. Anything you do with

the full belief that you're doing it to the best and most furious of your abilities is going to come out good.

MRR: You guys went-or started to go on a full US tour, right?

Lauren: We tried.

Jeff: It was going to be a 20-day tour and it worked out to be a 10-day tour with one show.

MRR: A tour of one city, right?

Lauren: No, we made it to another city, we just didn't play.

Jeff: Zanesville, Ohio.

Spencer: Do you know where Zanesville, Ohio is?

MRR: Never been there.

Spencer: Zanesville, Ohio is where that movie Gummo was filmed.

MRR: Was it accurate about the town?

Spencer: Pretty much.

Jeff: It's kind of funny. We broke down on this highway and the van was practically on fire and this cop pulls up and asks us if our van is broken, we said yes, and he left us there. I'd figure they're supposed to help you and not just abandon you, but-

MRR: No, they're cops, and that is why you're in a hardcore band.

Lauren: We ended up at a gas station where this guy with two naked lady tattoos and a Camero looked at the van and told us that we had lost a seal.

Jeff: That we'd reblown the transamission.

Lauren: After putting $2000 into it. And that his buddy, Rocky, could fix it the next day, and we could stay at his house.

Spencer: So we spent the night in his driveway.

MRR: You took him up on it?

Jeff: Yeah. The van wasn't moving. We put four quarts of transmission fluid into it and drove it to his house in the middle of nowhere-the roads weren't even paved. He offered to have us come in and order some pizza, but we chose to sleep in the van. Spencer slept in the hammock at the end of the driveway. In the middle of the night we heard this grinding and screeching and this car came sliding into the driveway.

Lauren: The only reason he didn't hit Spencer was he got caught on a stump.

Spencer: And I had no idea. I'm sleeping in this hammock and I hear the engine revving and I thought that they were trying to start the van. In the morning they were all like, "Are you OK?"

Lauren: Chris freaked out when the guy pulled in. He woke up and flipped out cause no one was in the car. He's like, "Oh my god, we're all gonna die." He woke up everybody in the van. Told us that he needed my mace and that we had to call the garage to make sure it was a real place. Everybody was just like, "Shut the fuck up and go to sleep."

Jeff: The next morning we woke up, and there was an early 80s Ford Escort and its bumper was up against the stump, right in front of the hammock Spencer was sleeping in. They chainsaw t-topped the roof off, so it was a chainsaw convertible. It was sweet!

Lauren: Brian Conner woke up with his head on the dashboard, looked around, and said ,"I feel like a jackerass." That was what the tour was in a word.

MRR: What the hell is a jackerass?

Lauren: That's what was funny. I think he meant to say "jackass" but he was still largely incoherent because of the insanity of the past 24 hours.

Jeff: Before we got stuck in Zanesville we were stuck in Philly for eight days waiting for a new transmission to come in.

Lauren: We ended up taking a Greyhound bus for 24 hours home from Zanesville, with a five hour layover in the NYC Port Authority, which we spent looking at porn.

MRR: Chris quit on tour, talk about that. Did everyone just start hating each other?

Jeff: Not at all.

Lauren: We actually are all really close-the rest of us.

Spencer: Chris and I were really tight. We started doing the band and kind of grew apart.

MRR: Now you both have rock star haircuts.

Spencer: Shut up.

Jeff: Think about it, if you'd both got the haircuts earlier the band would still be together in its original form.

There were just a whole bunch of things. Spencer was going to college, and I was more than willing to not play while Spencer was away, cause he wrote the music, and was a core founding member. I wouldn't do the band without him. We started to build on the sound, but that wasn't a unanimous decision to become more world hardcore sounding. I'd like to think that we now more effectively take influence from a wide range of stuff.

MRR: Is it safe to say that as your musical tastes grew, you got into more things and you wanted to bring them in and Chris did not?

Jeff: The one thing that's wrong with that is that our tastes hadn't so much grown, but it got to the point where we're like, it's fun to play standard American hardcore for like, five minutes, if that's the only thing you know. If you stop the process with Boston hardcore and DC it's just so myopic. It doesn't-

Lauren: The three of us were writing our songs and Chris was fighting us on everything.

MRR: And this all-

Lauren: Came to a head in Philly.

Spencer: Me and Chris weren't talking to each other at all by that point. We weren't even talking before the tour, which is bizarre when you're in a band with someone and you're touring with them. I think he thought that if I moved to Boston I couldn't be in the band cause I wouldn't be back every weekend.

Jeff: We were already well into the fight stage of banddom. We already fought about the way the songs should be written, what they should sound like. But he really wanted us to sound like DC circa '82.

Lauren: No changes at all, not have any sort of musical progression.

Spencer: Philly was where it came to the point where we sat down and were like, "We can't handle this anymore."

Lauren: He left us in NYC and we sat down and decided, "That's it." Then he quit, so it didn't even matter.

MRR: After you got home, was it a hard decision to continue on without him?

Jeff: No, it was immediate.

MRR: How long did it take you to find another drummer?

Jeff: Less than 12 hours. I called Rob when they told me and he said he'd love to do it, so that's where it stopped.

MRR: How long from there until you got Daryl.

Spencer: That wasn't till after I left. Friday was the first time I've actually played with him. First time I've met him, actually.

Jeff: From the dawn of SD to the end of the tour we had 15 songs. Since tour we have another 8.

MRR: How did the XfilesX split come about? Were you guys friends with them?

Jeff: I was friends with Brendan and Matt from their previous work, if you will.

MRR: You put out their record, right?

Jeff: Yeah.

MRR: Plug it.

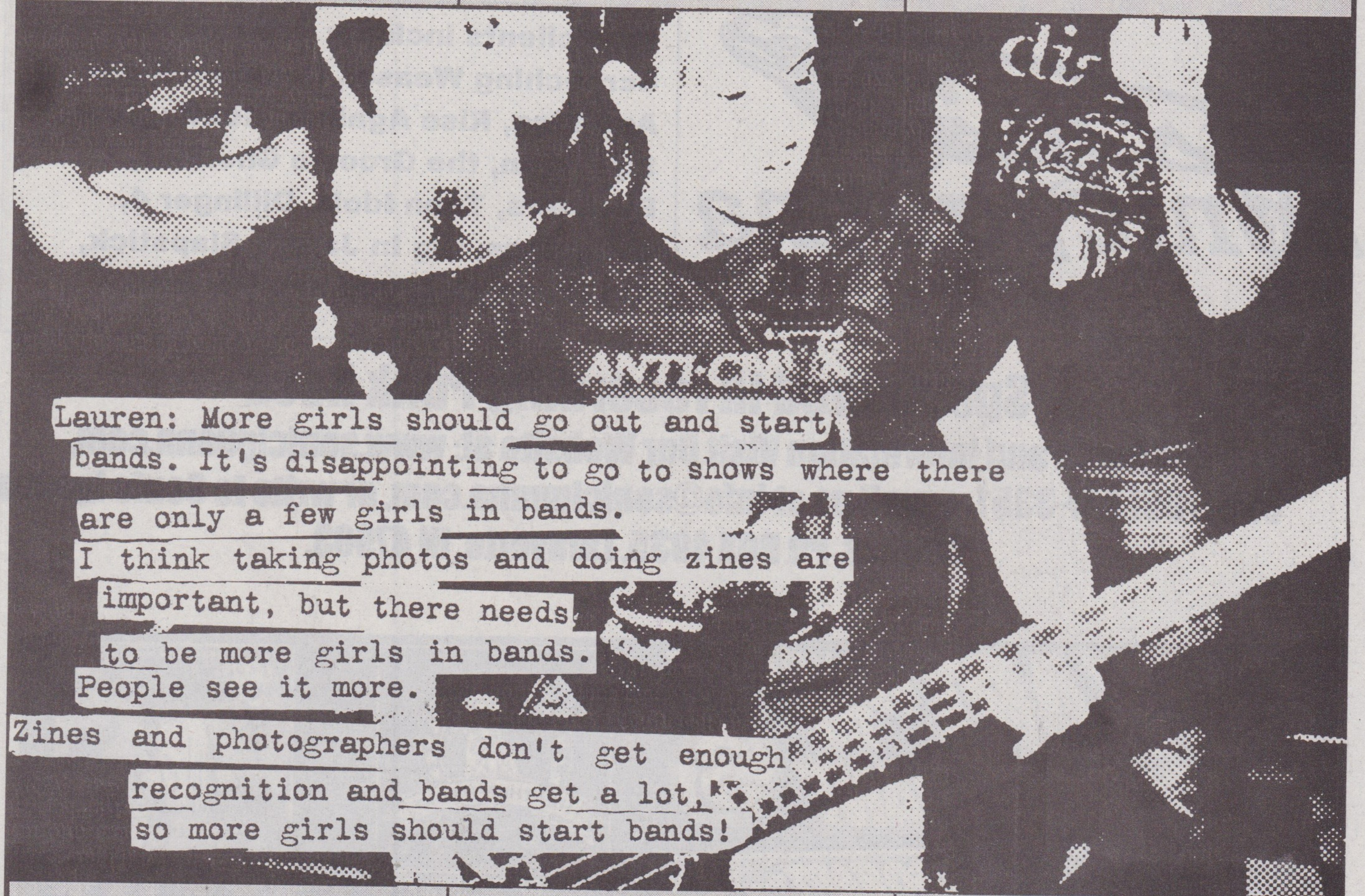
Jeff: No, that's all right. I think they want to keep it a secret. We'll let the readers figure it out. XFilesX used to

come and play back when they were more of a funny hardcore band, and we were always friends with them. Chris actually put out their second 7".

MRR: And the old singer of Self Defense released their first 7".

Jeff: Very incestuous.

Lauren: Yeah, that's true. And the split 12" that Jeff put out was with our drummer's other band, Breed/Extinction.



Spencer: Yeah, the Awakened split. Ah, I said it.

Jeff: You gotta edit that part out.

MRR: Seven degrees of Self Defense separation. How did the first 7" come about? It's on a West Coast label.

Lauren: When Life's Halt played here they stayed at Chris's house.

Jeff: That was actually my first show with the band.

Lauren: Ernie liked the demo and our performance.

Jeff: In his infinite wisdom I guess he saw some gem of quality underneath all the dreck.

Spencer: He did a really good job.

MRR: The record looks beautiful.

Jeff: I think he's actually booking the West Coast tour that we're doing.

MRR: So you guys are going west. When?

Jeff: We're flying out January fourth to the fourteenth.

Lauren: We're playing five shows with Breed/Extinction in California and Nevada, two in Oregon and Washington. They're coming with us.

MRR: So it's a two East Coast band tour of the West Coast.

Jeff: Breed/Extinction are touring two weeks before us. I don't think Daryl or I can get that much time off in such short notice.

Jeff: Hopefully some kids on the West Coast like us, because we've consistently been playing to, like, 15 kids for the last year and a half.

MRR: When I was on the West Coast there was actually some talk about you coming out there.

Jeff: That's good. It's been my experience that we're playing for ourselves. Outside of our general circle of friends we've gotten no positive feedback. There are a lot of politics involved in being in a hardcore band.

Lauren: We definitely do it because we like each other.

Jeff: There are a lot of politics of being in a hardcore band, outside of the actual politics.

MRR: Speaking of the actual politics, is hardcore political, and if so, what do you think makes it political? Is it Aus Rotten or something else?

Jeff: It's definitely something else. This is going to be a regurgitated answer, but just being a hardcore band is essentially a political act. If you do things the right way.

MRR: What is the right way?

Lauren: Putting out your own records.

MRR: You didn't put out your own records.

Lauren: Doing them on DIY labels.

Jeff: I don't like bands that don't talk about anything, like your standard shiny hardcore bands that just talk about revenge and vacant generic ideas and being pissed off, being pissed off is the catch phrase now. I want to see bands that think about stuff, that have something to be mad about. I certainly do not like bands whose politics are more important to them than being in a hardcore band. I need a band that's intensely a hardcore band but is also thinking about things afterwards. And that's why I used the word jurisprudence in a song.

MRR: Are you doing anything with your new songs?

Jeff: They're actually for a record, but there's no label involved presently, so if someone wants to put it out…it's going to be a split one-sided LP. I've got a friend who's an amazing artist and he's going to do the cover for it. We're recording in the end of November.

MRR: At the same place you recorded the 7"?

Lauren: We've done everything with Greg. He does a really good job.

Spencer: And at the point he knows how we want to sound.

Lauren: And he puts up with us.

MRR: What else do you want to say? The tape is winding down.

Lauren: More girls should go out and start bands. It's disappointing to go to shows where there are only a few girls in bands. I think taking photos and doing zines are important, but there needs to be more girls in bands. People see it more. Zines and photographers don't get enough recognition and bands get a lot, so more girls should start bands!

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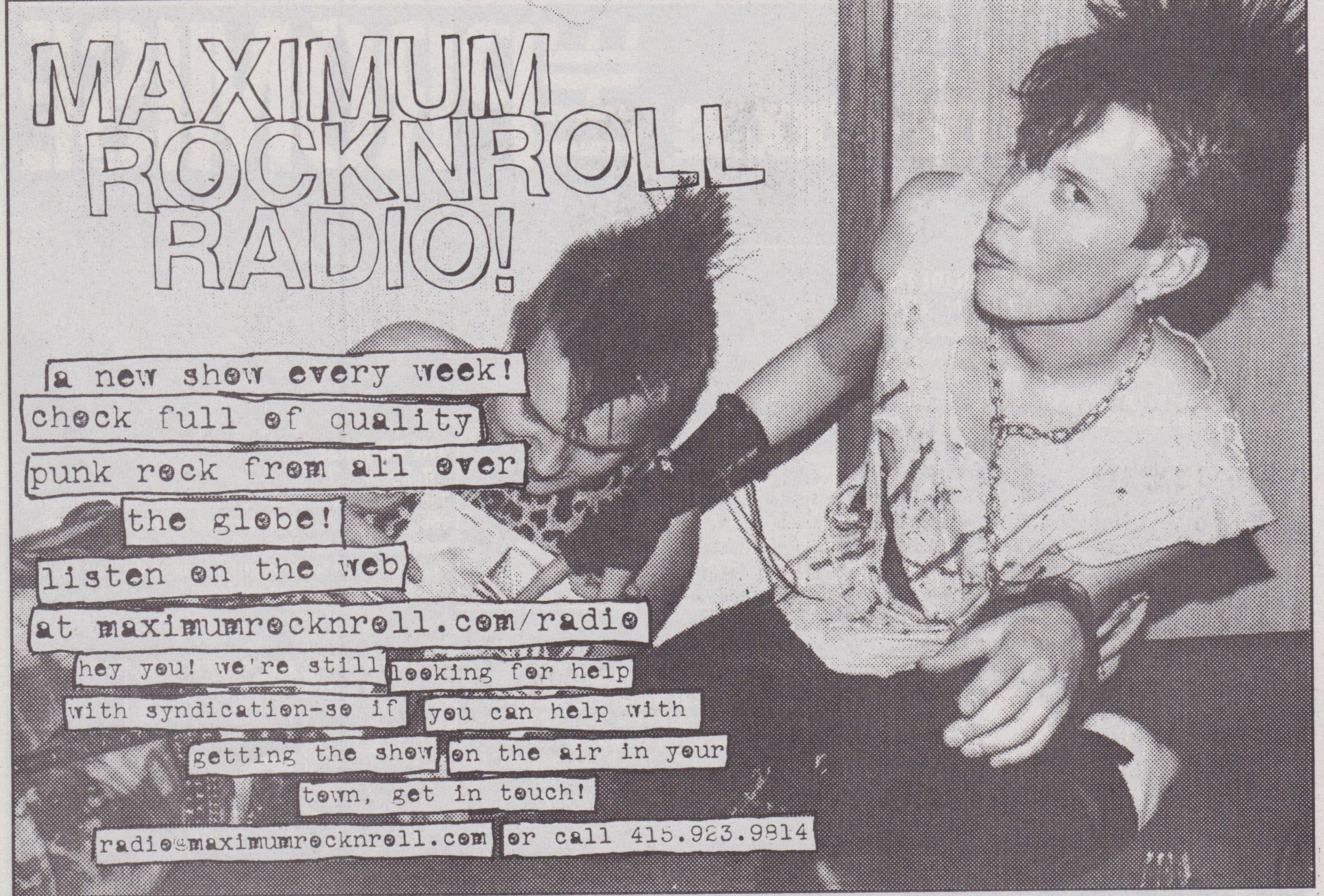

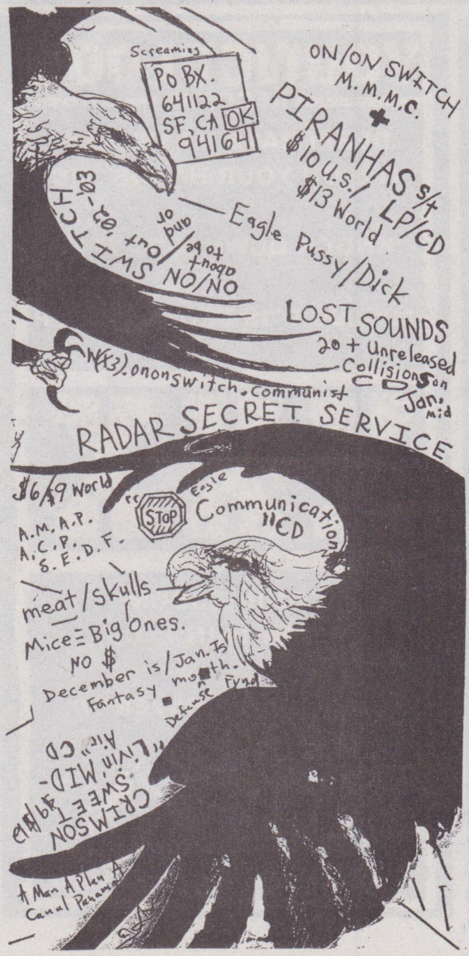

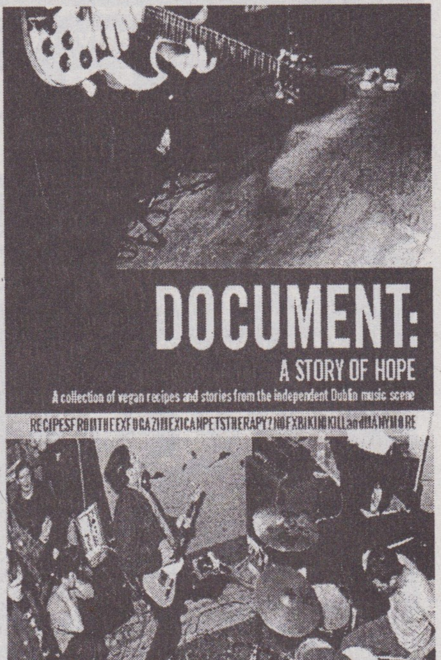

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BOOKS

Get Your War On • David Reis
$11.00
Soft Skull Press
71 Bond Street
New York, NY • 11217

The 3-panel comic strip is a wasteland of a medium. I mean, Dilbert is supposed to be funny? People joking about their bosses being idiots while grinning and bearing it for their entire lives is about the unfunniest thing this side of our next war. Or Garfield? Fattened domesticated cats who crave lasagna and make fun of their pathetic owner? Family Circus children who blame cookie theft on ghosts named "Not Me" and "Ida Know"? Do people over eight years old actually read (and enjoy) these comics? If so, what does this say about America?

David Rees's book of 3-panel strips about "The War on Terrorism" arrives just in time to maybe prove comics a form worth saving. It's been over a year since he was drinking hard and reading CNN.com in a stupor. Over a year since irony was declared dead by a Vanity Fair editor in a handwringing, patriotic editorial. We're not living in ironic times anymore? Didn't we drop aid packages into the minefields of a country we're both at war with and trying to rebuild? I don't know what kind of irony is dead now, but the American kind that tells the United Nations to eat shit is as alive and kicking as flag sales.

Rising from the cloud of absurdity, Rees made a comic from public domain clip art and emailed it to a handful of friends. "When I made a strip about people getting blown up trying to retrieve food aid packages, it felt like a wave of relief just swept through me, like I was finally looking at the comic I had been searching for, or like I had summed up all the pain and absurdity I had been feeling using these three little stupid cartoon panels," he explained in an interview.

And with these three panels, there's finally been something that approaches the black humor of our times. Using the same clip art of office workers and wielding a vocabulary as profane as it is incisive, Rees has created a world where amateur poets ask "What rhymes with alcohol-saturated dread?" and co-workers ask "Seriously, who the fuck are we fighting, fucking Lex Luthor? When is the goddamn Death Star gonna shoot that big-ass laser at us?" and "I know! What's next—George W. Bush is gonna hold a press conference and fuckin' rip his face off and it's gonna be Ming the Merciless up under there? Jesus!" Get Your War On reprints in red the first year of these strips.

We never learn the character's names, but we watch them grapple with Operation Enduring Freedom and the anthrax scares on through the Enron debacle, Exxon's sanctioned atrocities in Indonesia, and the current, imminent war with Iraq. If Rees was wanting to stop the comic when the madness is over, he may have to wait a long fucking time. As the temp (who he referred to as "the donut lady" in a reading) asks herself, "Is this truly the only Earth I can live on?"

The online version of Rees's comics is available at getyourwaron.com. The series has continued with an 80s version talking about Saddam Hussein and the US government being "best friends forever." "Get Your Civil War On" has made a brief but hilarious appearance as well. And recent strips have focused on Dick Cheney's backdrop of blood-n-skulls.

Before you feel too bad about laughing at atrocities committed in your name, Rees is donating all his royalties to the Adopt-a-Minefield Campaign. Soft Skull is also kicking down some money from sales of the book. Who says who can't be brutal and positive at the same time? —Travis Fristoe

What A Long Strange Strip It's Been- Keith Knight
127 pgs. $12.95
Top Shelf Productions P.O. Box 1282
Marietta, GA 30061-1282

Keith Knight brings us another collection of somewhat politically tinged cartoons,The K Chronicles, in his new unfortunately-titled book. I read this entire book while working out my community service hours for the S.F.P.D.'s pretrial diversion project. I settled into an easy chair in the lobby of a welfare hotel on McCallister and dove into the book as M.A.S.H. blared off of the television set.

I don't think I've ever actually read the K Chronicles before, but I can remember spotting it in a few free weeklies in the last several years. Most of the comics have a social/political slant to them than lean more to the "liberal" side of things. I liked the comics that dealt with the trials and tribulations of the days right after September 11th, how the whole world's outlook changed in just a matter of hours. He does a pretty good job of portraying this feeling of depression and hopelessness that I think a lot of my friends and I felt in the days immediately following the "terrorist attacks". It was scary to watch the country just fall into the same racist structure that existed 10 years ago, during the Gulf War. It was refreshing to see political cartoons that reflected the way that I felt about people's attitudes rather than just reinforcing stereotypes like most of the cartoons I saw in many U.S. newspapers.

The comics go on to tackle other issues such as local politics (Knight lives in SF), violence, and sexual abuse, while also keeping the humor afloat with stories of crashing dot com parties, hanging out in Las Vegas, and making fun of President Bush. Really though, one of my favorites starts out with the line, "I was upstairs chillin' in Gunther's flat watching Teletubbies the other day."

I would recommend this book to people who feel like they need a collection of comics from the free weeklies. I feel that, somehow, that says a lot about it. This isn't something that really excites me. While I feel like Knight is on "our side" with a lot of his comics, there are still things about it that make me uncomfortable.There's the random comics thrown in every once in a while about ogling women or the ones poking fun at comics that got turned into movies that sound not-so-vaguely like bitter jealousy. His comics give me the feel that he's just waiting to get "discovered" so that he can make a lot of money. While a lot of people don't really have a problem with that, I'd rather not hear about it.

Some of the strips talk about being a "struggling artist" and having to sneak into the dot com party for food and free alcohol. Juxtaposed with the enviroment I was reading this in (welfare hotel in SF where the residents would probably get the cops called on them for stepping foot into a

dot com), it was hard for me to feel sorry for the guy.

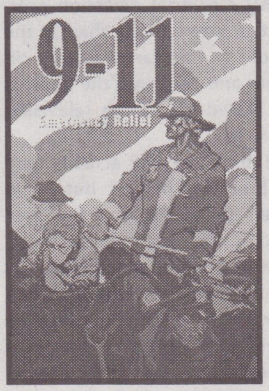
While this book isn't horrible, it's also not something I would buy (perhaps take to lunch at my old book store job and forget to return?). While I agreed with most of the more serious social and political commentary, the jokey strips left me with a bad taste in my mouth. It just reminded me of that certain aspect of mainstream culture that always makes me uneasy. It's the aspect that jokes about bra sizes, sports and celebrities. While Knight attempts to poke fun at these issues on a roundabout way, it comes off as flat and unconvincing, in that "joking around with the dudes" sort of way.

As I closed the book at the end of my "work" day in the back of a police van, I was hoping for some kind of jolt back into reality. The two guys in front of me were arguing over which was more practical, being a pimp or starting your own escort service.

"No man, just be a pimp. Treat the girls well. Feed them, clothe them. You get to keep your cash and don't have to pay no fees to the man. You get hella bank, bro."

Somehow, it was the jolt that I needed to snap me back.—Greg Harvester

9-11: Emergency Relief
A Comic Book to Benefit the Red Cross
Edited by Jeff Mason
189 pages • $14.95
Alternative Comics
503 NW 37th Avenue
Gainesville, FL 32609
www.indyworld.com



Ah, The National Tragedy. On that morning, a year and a half ago, I was seven months pregnant and John had the radio alarm clock set for 6 am. It came on blasting the top of the hour news about the first plane having hit the World Trade Center. The broadcasters were still in the "oh, terrible accident" mode at that point. We piled out of bed, and I waddled into the next room to watch on TV. There, still rubbing my eyes, I saw the second plane hit. Then, as some correspondent was live at the Pentagon, you could hear a thud and see a whoosh of smoke. Since I'm in San Francisco, I still went in to school for advising hours, but had few customers—one a girl who felt guilty talking about her proposed documentary project in view of the circumstances, and the other, a student who had been somewhat of my stalker. He wouldn't leave, and eventually acted so peculiar that the department's tech manager called the police and had him escorted out of the building. (They didn't realize he acted like that all the time). For the next few days, in classes of various sizes, there was a weird therapy that had to take place before we could get on with the f-stops and sound mixing. I was not accustomed to it, and it was awkward for me to be looked to for some context for these events.

This is not the most interesting story, but it's my experience of the 911 disasters. That's the nagging flaw in this otherwise great benefit volume of comics, called 9-11 Emergency Relief. It's peppered with stories even more prosaic and dull than my own (although, as pregnant as I was, this could have been some good visuals). They may be authentic, but—I feel incredibly self-conscious saying this—many of them are oddly dull.

9-11 features the work of some 62 artists, including the likes of Harvey Pekar, Ted Rall, Carol Lay, Will Eisner, and Peter Kuper. The pieces range from multi-page novelettes to single-page, wordless drawings. The range of quality, which includes some shallow patriotic slop as well as some witty and compelling work, matches the range of styles. There are many reflexive references to writers "not being able to create anything," so overwhelmed are they by the enormity of the events. I think that is accurate—and a major problem for this book. The editors have traded quality for immediacy, which is perplexing for a project that was published months after the attack.

The book opens with comics by people who were nowhere near New York City (though I noticed that many artists refer to the Small Press Expo that traditionally takes place on September 12 or so, thus engendering their near misses). The more awkward ones involve the phrases "worst attack on American soil since Pearl Harbor," "new heroes," or the ubiquitous "I just had to be with my girlfriend Rima (or Sari or Leslie or Fawn)..." One piece is just about how this comic artist decides to put up an American flag. And he does! Big deal.

The second half or so are comics by people in and around Manhattan and DC. Artfully if conventionally drawn, there are so many of those guys wanting to be with their girlfriends that I was incredibly relieved to see Donna Barr's story about solo drinking and group vomiting. Ditto for Jenny Gonzalez, who writes about being released from the City Hospital Psych Ward on September 10, and then maneuvering her paranoid delusional self through the day on September 11. Peter Kuper draws a refreshingly vexatious page of a guy lamenting the doom all across town until he sees a "hot" babe, and becomes distracted. Equally great are Mike Manley's "A Tale of Two Brothers," Joyce Brabner's and David Laskey's "Under the Peace Arch," and Gregory Benton's beautiful "Treasure."

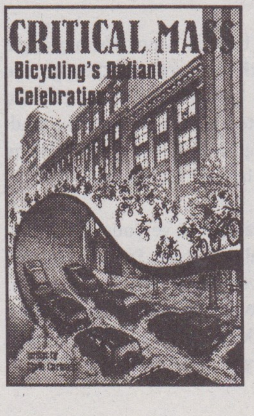
The most haunting comic in the book was not about 9-11 at all, but about Attica. Chris Knowle and K. Thor Jensen tell an intriguing story about Chris's grandfather, who was a guard taken hostage during the riots at Attica, tortured, then saved by an inmate who died rather than reveal the grandfather's hiding place. The metaphor in the story is strong, and it is transposed onto the World Trade Center disaster, viewing it through a new lens, rather than recounting some lame "where were you when" story. I wish more of the contributions to this book had such substance.

The worthwhile thing about the corny and sappy ones is that they document a moment where people threw over their intellect for a Spielbergian nostalgia for an America that never was. All the moaning about the US being "no longer safe..." well, for a lot of nonwhite people, for a lot of women, for a lot of immigrants, it hasn't been safe all along.

And the "new heroes" soon went back to their racism and divisiveness in several well-documented incidents around the Ground Zero. Oh, and did I mention the looting? Firefighters are certainly welcome at a fire, but even as a former firefighter myself, I wouldn't want to hang out with them. They are usually a bunch of resentful drunks who couldn't make it to be cops and who secretly the despise women and black people who try to break into their fraternity.

Sure, I'm more cynical now, especially when the subsequent terrorist attacks failed to materialize here. And when there have been more Afghani civilian casualties than in all of the 9-11 events combined, it's just too hard to read some of this pulp. It's not that the feelings of these artists aren't valid, it's just that the analysis is simply not always there. But this book is worth it for the contributions that rise above the general weepfest and really make a powerful emotional connection.
—Greta S.

Critical Mass Bicycling's Defiant Celebration
edited by Chris Carlsson
256 pages • $18.95
AK Press • 674A 23rd Street
Oakland, CA • 94612



September 27th marked the tenth anniversary of Critical Mass, a monthly bicycle ride in which groups of folks clog the streets in protest of car domination and celebration of cycling. There was this beautiful poster up all over town inviting everyone to come. I hadn't been to Critical Mass in San Francisco since mid-1996. I rolled up to find the Justin Hermann Plaza packed with thousands of bicycles, hundreds of cops, and a handful of camera crews. The ride filled the streets of

downtown for nearly four hours. I watched with fascination that whipped into a whiskey-induced glee as smiling cyclists rolled through downtown. I saw peaceful pedaling coupled with aggro confrontations.

One motorist asked me, in a frantic tone, "What if there was a pregnant woman back there, trapped?"

"Uh, is there?" I asked.

This is the nature of protests: hypothetical paranoia to avoid real confrontation and discussion. I continued to ride and came upon a pickup truck inanely spinning its wheels, belching plumes of caustic gas, and potentially ruining its engine.

"Ha," said I.

At the end of the ride a phalanx of riot-geared cops stormed the intersection of 18th and Dolores Streets. By that time, most of the revelers were done reveling and had rolled on by. I grabbed a beer and watched the sea of bikes from the top of the hill. It was fun. I didn't go the next month. I've been to Critical Mass in Australia as well as in the States, I've seen rides deteriorate into a destructive clash of angry people from both sides, and I've seen productive, peaceful bicycle advocacy.

I was stoked to read this anthology of essays about Critical Mass, because, frankly, I'm interested in seeing what Critical Mass means to other people.

Critical Mass—Bicycling's Defiant Celebration is introduced and edited by long time Mass organizer Chris Carlsson. Though the nature of Critical Mass is a leaderless bicycle ride, Carlsson is credited with being one of the founders of this international movement, with roots in the San Francisco rides. I had hoped for a concise essay on the history of Critical Mass, but instead found in the five different segments of the book many essays that answered some of my questions about the origin, leadership, and intent of these rides.

The first 70-odd pages chronicle the experiences of different people involved in Critical Mass in cities around the world. What at first seemed like a headlong jump into a giant sea soon made sense to me. These narratives immerse the reader with sensations from the different rides. The first essay, by Travis Culley, is a visceral point-by-point account of one man's first ride. He captures the spirit, the contagious adrenaline rush of watching a slew of bikes take over the streets, of seeing an idea work. I was struck by how many of these first-time riders were surprised at how easy it is to take over the streets. One group inadvertently had their first Critical Mass while all riding together to a meeting about organizing a Critical Mass. In Stuttgart, Germany, a single bicyclist rode alone with police escorts, but still felt that he was in fact a Critical Mass. What these essays have in common is a personal and warm quality, like a letter from a friend telling you about the wild time they had last Friday.

The next 70 pages detail the political agendas and ramifications of the Critical Mass movement. The anarchistic organization of these bike ride—with no route, no leader—allows for nearly anything to occur. Many of the essays focus on similar topics: the correlation between oil and war and car culture, the need for autonomy in our societies, the need for social awareness. It is this link, this introspection into the human condition and investigation—into the effect, not just the cause—that makes Critical Mass a larger movement rather than just a rambling bike ride. A few of these essays are heavy with dogmatic language and the overzealous stance that Critical Mass will change the world, but most of the contributors come off as engaging, well-informed people who each have a different idea of how Critical Mass impacts their own city. Overwhelmingly, people see Critical Mass as a means to speak out on nearly every social injustice, bike advocacy is a priority, but not the sole issue at hand. Check out Josh Wilson's essay for a well-written overview of Critical Mass in San Francisco.

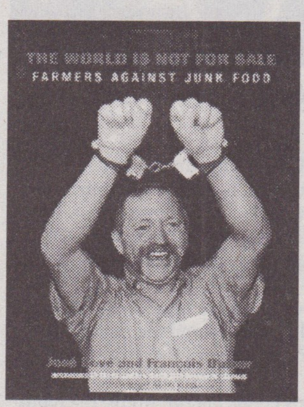
The third section delves into the media's interpretation of Critical Mass, as well as those participating. There is an essay about zines and leaflets that highlights many publications created in the 90s, as well as excerpts from Critical Mass influenced zines. Ted White talks about his bikeumentarys Return of the Scorcher and We Are Traffic! Also, there is a great essay about a huge bicycle protest in San Francisco in 1896.

And of course there will be problems, problems worth fighting for. The fourth section of the book is part history book, part bragging rights, and part instruction manual. There are tales of wild parties along with essays detailing the use of force by law enforcement .

An Appendix defining many of the words used during the rides, along with an how-to segment can be found in the last section of this book.

Throughout Critical Mass—Bicycling's Defiant Celebration an array of flyers, photos, and comics accompany essays to create a vibrant—though at times redundant, and definitely San Francisco-centric—look at the phenomenon of Critical Mass.—Sara Double-Ears

The World is not for Sale: Farmers Against Junk Food
Jose Bove and Francois Dufour
222 pages • $16.00
Verso • 180 Varick Street
New York, NY • 10014-4606



Since I've lived in a city for many years, and talked to many urbanites and activists opposing globalization, it's fascinating and refreshing to read about farmers who are also trying to fight agribusiness and corporate control of the food supply. This book, a series of interviews with farmer activists Bove and Dufour, provides a glimpse of the type of coalition needed to stop McDonald's, Archer Daniels Midland, and the WTO from dominating even more of the world than they already do.

Dufour is a third generation farmer in Normandy and General Secretary of the French Farmers' Confederation. Bove is most well known for organizing the dismantling, bolt by bolt, of a McDonald's in his region of France to protest WTO tariff penalties against French Roquefort cheese because France wouldn't accept hormone-ridden US beef. Bove is also a leader of the Union of Ewe's Milk Producers. (As a cheese monger who has actually tasted and sold Bove's cheese, I consider myself the perfect *MRR* reviewer for this book.)

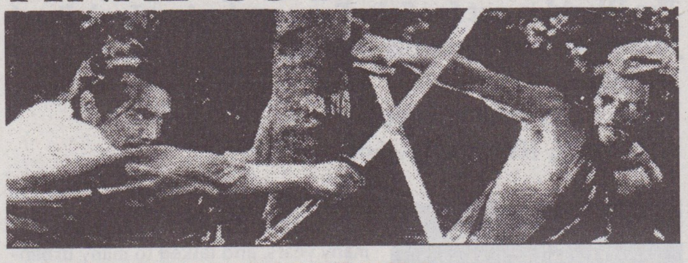
But rather than organizing around only the immediate needs of local farmers, both have seen that the only chance for small-scale farming is by opposing the very nature of the corporate take over of agriculture. The book covers their individual histories and politicizations, the rise of junk food and the homogenization of culture, factory farming, and trying to maintain freedom from "free trade." Dufour puts his opposition to globalization succinctly: "Globalization is treating the planet as one vast commercial domain, where no rules or restrictions apply, and goods are exchanged with no heed for social, ethical or environmental values. It's the hegemonic market, intent on devouring everything."

The bottom line is that this drive for profit will take the world to places most of us don't want to go, with lowered quality of life for those of us not making the profits, and environmental destruction for all. Bove makes this point more colorfully: "To understand the extent of this, all you have to do is look how the traffic in money makes more profit that traditional production and trading activities combined. Today, money works by itself. This has produced a new species of parasite: vampires thirsty for money. Money addicts."

Throughout this book, the two farmer-organizers tell stories of organizing across France and the world, showing the possibility of food and environmental security as primary and common political issues for people across different spectrums of society. I highly recommend this as both a great introduction to these issues and an inspirational collection success stories for those already familiar and working with them.—Gordon Zola

MOVIES

FINAL CUT BY STEVEN SPINALI



PROPAGATING PROPAGANDA

The most shocking moment in Michael Moore's new documentary, **Bowling for Columbine**, happens halfway in, with his tallies of international gun-related deaths. In stats that fill a 35mm screen, he runs through a list of affluent First World countries—England, France, Japan, Germany—all of whom have between 40 and 60 gun deaths per year. And then he gets to the United States, with 11,500.

The statistics seem impossible, but headlines suggest the opposite. This enigma forms the moral center of **Bowling for Columbine**, as well as the controversial idea that the prevalence of guns in America may not be the *sole* reason for the scores of dead.

The title of Moore's film is a blackly comic play on words; the morning of the Columbine massacre, the two teenage boys who staged the attack had been in their school's elective class for bowling. As we hear Camper van Beethoven's "Take the Skinheads Bowling" in the background, Moore facetiously asks whether it was bowling, perhaps the most boring spectator sport next to curling, that pushed them over the edge.

But all jokes aside, what did? Michael Moore divides his time equally between being moral crusader and seeker of truth. It seems everyone he asks, pundit or man on the street, has their own theory—the decline of religion, the decline of the family, the overabundance of guns, rap music, rock music, violent movies, violence on TV. Sometimes it seems the answer depends on your agenda.

Even **Bowling for Columbine** has been characterized as slickly packaged propaganda—but never as simplistic. In truth, it suggests that gun use is more a symptom of an underlying problem that hovers just out of our view.

The film includes chilling security camera sequences of the Littleton massacre—scenes of swaggering, gun-wielding high-schoolers who might as well be poster boys for the anti-gun cause. But then, Michael Moore brings his camera crew to Canada, a country with roughly the same socioeconomic profile as the US, with kids who watch the same violent American TV and play the same violent video games. And there are *lots* of guns. So why do they have only 60 gun-related deaths a year?

Moore hears a strange rumor he simply has to check out. Apparently, Canadians leave all their doors unlocked, even at night. The camera crew hobbles from home to home, and like any good social scientist-cum-troublemaker, Moore tests out his ideas. Indeed, all the doors he touches are fearlessly unlocked. Even more surprising, the residents seem more bemused than outraged by Moore's intrusion into their homes.

According to Moore, America's culture of fear—of everything from racial minorities and crime to germ warfare and dirty nukes, plays into our national consciousness every night at news-time and all over the front page. The only thing that can displace the latest tragedy is a worse atrocity. And what better way to assuage that insecurity than with a gun, with its almost mythic power (a point Michael Moore secures with numerous snippets of movie gunplay).

Michael Moore saves the best for last, including an merciless interview with NRA spokesman Charlton Heston, who routinely schedules his speaking appearances shortly after a particularly bad shooting. Often he shows up in the very city it occurred, rubbing salt on the wound. But Moore is at his shitkicking best as he tries to convert his convictions into social action in the documentary's astonishing climax.

The final credits roll to Joey Ramone's cover of "What a Wonderful World," and it couldn't be a more ironic capper to this funny, probing, and articulate piece of filmmaking.

It's not without reason that American policy-makers hate Cuban leader Fidel Castro so much. In 1959, he overthrew the US-supported Batista dictatorship, survived at least four assassination attempts (including the Bay of Pigs embarrassment), cultivated ties with America's sworn enemy, the Communists in Russia, and outlasted seven presidents (now on his eighth). **Fidel**, directed by the leader's friend Estela Bravo, sometimes comes off more as a promotional film than a straight-ahead documentary. But with all the anti-Castro invective out there, maybe there's room for a corrective.

Even a promotional film can be appealing, and much of **Fidel**'s interest owes to its narrative of the man's origins. We're treated to rare glimpses of his childhood photos. Interviews reveal Castro, a lawyer, to have a special talent for consolidating individuals with different points of view. Articulate and charismatic, he began to agitate against the US presence in Cuba—which landed him in prison with a five-year sentence (partially commuted). While under lock and key, he claims to have read day and night, learning as much in prison as he did in school.

Bravo ignores Castro's human rights record once he became dictator, and masterfully trims and edits his public image to seem more like a caring father figure. 1962's Cuban missile crisis, which brought the US to the brink of nuclear war (for the presence of Russian missiles on Cuban soil), is viewed as a political necessity. The victim of an American trade embargo that continues to this day, Castro cultivated alliances where he could.

As the film putters along, **Castro** grows increasingly light in content. "He can't dance," claims Pulitzer prize-winning author Alice Walker says, "and he can't sing. I find that very interesting." We witness Nobel Prize-winning author Gabriel Garcia Marquez's close relationship to the dictator, who claims to confer with the writer for his most serious policy decisions. His list of celebrity endorsers includes Jack Nicholson, the late Jack Lemmon, and film director Sidney Pollack. Even Morley Safer's 60 *Minutes* interview is made it seem as if he's a close friend.

Balance is not one of **Castro**'s assets. But Estela Bravo renders such a feel-good portrait that it's hard not to appreciate her affection for a man many Americans have been taught to hate.

(If you prefer a glimpse at Castro that's more kiss-and-tell biopic cum primer in conspiracy theory, you might be interested in Wilfried Huismann's recent documentary, **Dear Fidel**, which offers the first-hand story of his lover Marita Lorenz.)

A less well-known event in America's involvement with Vietnam had to do with the mixed-race children many GIs left behind. Partly for humanitarian purposes (but also for good press), the US instituted "Operation Baby Drop," which united many of these children with suitable American parents. Due to the immense prejudice these children would receive in their homeland, a number of them even left living parents left behind.

The remarkable documentary, **Daughter from Danang,** tells one such story of an infant girl, Mai Thi Hep. She quickly found herself in an all-too-typical suburban life delineated by malls, proms, and all the other trappings of the middle class. Renamed Heidi Pulaski, she looked so American that even her best friends couldn't tell she was part Vietnamese. She eventually married and had several children of her own, but also had a dream—to meet her biological parents, even if after a chasm of 22 years.

In documenting the first meeting, filmmakers Gail Colgin and Vincente Franco were given total access to that pivotal moment. Heidi's meeting is simultaneously heart-rending and hair-raising. Her mother, Mai Thi Kim, turns out to be profoundly loving to point of smothering her lost daughter, seemingly unable to lose physical contact for even a moment. The family holds a great feast for Heidi in spite of their relative poverty; and no sooner than the next day, at a formal family meeting, Heidi's uncle is blunt about Heidi's new financial responsibilities to the clan. Mai Thi Kim suggests immigrating to America, possibly as a first step to bringing over her whole family.

At times, one feels like an intruder into a disaster-in-progress, each exchange like alighting in a minefield.

In a post-screening interview, Heidi admitted to still feeling the effects of the meeting, though she was considering reestablishing ties to her distant family—on her own terms. It's also quite clear that she's uncomfortable with the idea of her new role—as cornerstone of her overseas clan.

While Heidi's story is still very much an open book, the chapters we're privileged to see in **Daughter from Danang** make for spellbinding real-life drama.

Reactions? Email me at sjspinali@yahoo.com.

The folks at Kung Fu Records never stop promoting all things VANDALS and Orange County, which must be great if you're a VANDALS fan. On the flipside of that reasoning, it can be torture for those of us who aren't the biggest fans of the VANDALS, Orange County, or the last 10 to 15 years of melodic hardcore to come out of "OC," the ranch dressing capital of the world. **Sweatin' To The Oldies** is a DVD reissue of the documentary about the VANDALS, directed by the guy who did *The Kids Are Alright*. It's a DVD release, and so you know you're going to get some bonus material that in most cases should have been left on the cutting room floor, but in the case of **Sweatin' To The Oldies**, you get more than that.

This is a two-disc DVD release. That's right, an entire DVD of bonus VANDALS footage! Yes, it was turning into the worst nightmare come true for this pseudo-*MRR* columnist, but then I watched **Sweatin' To The Oldies**, and guess what? My eyes didn't explode, and my brain didn't blast right through the top of my head. Actually I was pleasantly surprised, and even entertained. The bonus footage is amazing, and hilarious, and so whitebread that I realized finally that the VANDALS aren't running from their peckerwood heritage, or the ever-present influence that growing up in the overwhelmingly Republican suburb of Orange County had on them. Once everything is taken into consideration, I found it hard to hate on the VANDALS because I respect honesty—**Sweatin' To The Oldies** is an honest portrayal of a band has had some success in the punk world, but is nowhere near the level of some of its contemporaries in terms of popularity or record sales. The cool thing is that though you sense the band's realization of this—if only vaguely—the VANDALS are also very aware of how lucky they are to have attained the success and opportunity that have come their way over the last 15 years.

Just to give you an idea of why I've had a hard time in the past giving these Kung Fu Records DVDs good reviews, take into consideration the fact that the bands I grew up listening to, everyone from the CRAMPS to MINOR THREAT, weren't even allowed into a place like Disneyland, but it's where the VANDALS used to hang out, and where they first saw their drummer Josh Freeze playing electric drums for a Disneyland kids' band that specialized in covering 1980s billboard hits. It's also interesting that Warren Fitzgerald, their craziest member, is so similar to every attention-starved punk you ever knew that you'd probably dismiss him, if he wasn't in the VANDALS, as just another one of those guys who will occasionally do something kind of funny to save a slow show or a sedate party from completely bombing, and of course it's only then that we really take notice anyway. The cool thing about **Sweatin' To The Oldies** is that it makes clear how insulated the VANDALS' scene is, and how little they actually care about whether you are impressed or not. It's all kind of an inside joke at this point. When Joe states that Dave Quakenbush is still the coolest guy in his neighborhood, you don't really feel the need to question or argue—it's like when you have older relatives and they suddenly find religion or get spiritual. If it helps them to be happy and accept the reality of their lives, then who are we to question? **Sweatin' To The Oldies** may be the most important release ever by this band, CD or DVD, and even the second DVD bonus footage is a must have for the SUGAR CUBES interview alone. (www.kungfurecords.com, PO BOX 38009, Hollywood, California 90038)

I quickly want to let you know about two interesting videos I received this month. The first of those is **Heart Of Nowhere**, a 30-minute montage of video footage shot in Alabama by a member of XBXRX and the guy who does lifedeath.com. I could give you the back story, which was included with this video, but why bore you as much as I was by their lame attempt at explanation? Let's skip all of that and get right to the heart of the matter, which is that this video is unexplainable, and yet very worth watching if you ever wanted to get a sense of what life is like for a young person, especially of the punk freak variety, in Alabama. Fetish clubs, Goth get-togethers, dirt bikes, karaoke, and so much more is shown in quick little shots that only hint at the weirdness that these events take on in the context of Alabama and the South in general. I've watched it twice already, and you will too. (Walt Creel, 1703 Richard Arrington Jr., Blvd. S., Apt. 8, Birmingham, AL 35205, info@heartofnowhere.com)

The other video that I had a blast watching was a **GUITAR WOLF Live/BOTTLE UP AND GO!** video zine comp #2. A split video! This has live GUITAR WOLF in Japan, which would be a hard premise to fuck up, and they don't. GUITAR WOLF unleashes a devastating set of noisy, feedback-laden rocknroll that will have you begging for more, and the way they cover "Teenage Lobotomy" and "Kick Out The Jams" will have you burning your pathetically inferior original versions of these classics. If that weren't enough, after GUITAR WOLF you get hit with some awesome footage of TEENGENERATE, 5-6-7-8s, BOBBYTEENS, MUMMIES, PHANTOM SURFERS, and much, much more! cool release. (http://www.musicmine.co.jp/)

Mauz from Life Is Abuse records sent me a documentary entitled **Behind the Bandbox**, a Claire Burch film, and it turned out to be one of the best underground films that we've ever had the pleasure of viewing here at the PMN HQ. **Behind the Bandbox** is a documentary about Chelsea and Cobra, a mother and son who have lived on the streets in Berkeley, California for as long as I can personally remember. At least ten years of that time is documented in this film, which is captured as intimately as is probably humanly possible given Chelsea and Cobra's lifestyles, as well as that of Chelsea's partner Bones. Chelsea and Cobra are known to most in Berkeley as two of many street people who have spare changed for years on "The Ave" or in Downtown Berkeley, but **Behind the Bandbox** shows you what got them to that point, and also what keeps them there, factors which are very real on the one hand, and probably very psychological and self-realized on the other. Cobra is shown early on as cancer survivor, but the survival process is ongoing, and we are struck by Cobra's ability to withstand 27 surgeries, as well as his willingness to be an activist for the homeless by constantly putting his own freedom and health at stake in a battle that is almost as old in Berkeley as the "Ave" itself. He is also an artist, and there is an interesting interview segment where Cobra insinuates, or at least begins to consider, that his art and his creations are worth more and perhaps are more important that his mother Chelsea treats them, and has treated them in the past. The editing and overall running time of this film tend to obscure great moments such as that one, as well as some of the dramatic transitions that are taking place over the years, especially in terms of Chelsea's behavior.

Chelsea is first seen as a down-on-her-luck mother of a sick child looking for a way out. By the end of the film, we don't believe for a moment that she wants a traditional way out, but rather that she is so traumatized by her upbringing and a decade or more spent on the streets that you could never peel enough layers off of the onion in your search for the old Chelsea. She doesn't exist anymore. The biggest conflict in the film is trying to figure out if this process has done the same to Cobra already, or whether there is a chance that he can somehow escape the fate that has befallen his mother and her alcoholic partner Bones, who is plagued by so many demons that when he tries to describe (and he does) them, it's just too overwhelming. **Behind the Bandbox** isn't a perfect documentary, but it's very well done, and it's so obviously a labor of love for its filmmaker that you will get sucked in. With some more editing, **Behind the Bandbox** would probably find a much larger audience, and I think Chelsea and Cobra's story is worthy of that. (Regent Press, 6020-A Adeline, Oakland, California 94608, regentpress@mindspring.com)

Lastly but not leastly is a sick as fuck DVD release from DISCORDANCE AXIS that is jam-packed with awesome video footage from their Japanese tour, plus some promo footage, and most importantly, excellent sound quality that really captures the grind insanity of this superior band. The overall design for this DVD alone sets this apart from usual DIY DVD releases we get here at PMN. Tabulature and a gallery are also included. **Pikadourei** is a must have for fans of grind. (http://www.studio-grey.com/da/).

Got an underground film or video that you want me to check out? Send it to: Jay, PMB #419, 1442A Walnut Street, Berkeley, CA 94709.

J CHURCH
Palestine

A new CD of all unreleased material recorded as a demo for an unreleased album from back in '97. Includes "Not Proud Of The USA", "State Of Things" and the "Underground trilogy. This CD is a benefit to help pay for the losses from the fire that destroyed most of the band and record label stuff.
$10 post paid.

DFI
self-titled CD

Fourth full length release from Didonato from Illinois. This disc is a genius mixture of the Fucking Champs, Orthrelm, Ween and Fantomas. Even the song titles speak volumes: "Myopic Dystopia", "The Devil May Not Care", "Crystal With A 'K'", and "The Dudes Are Stoked".
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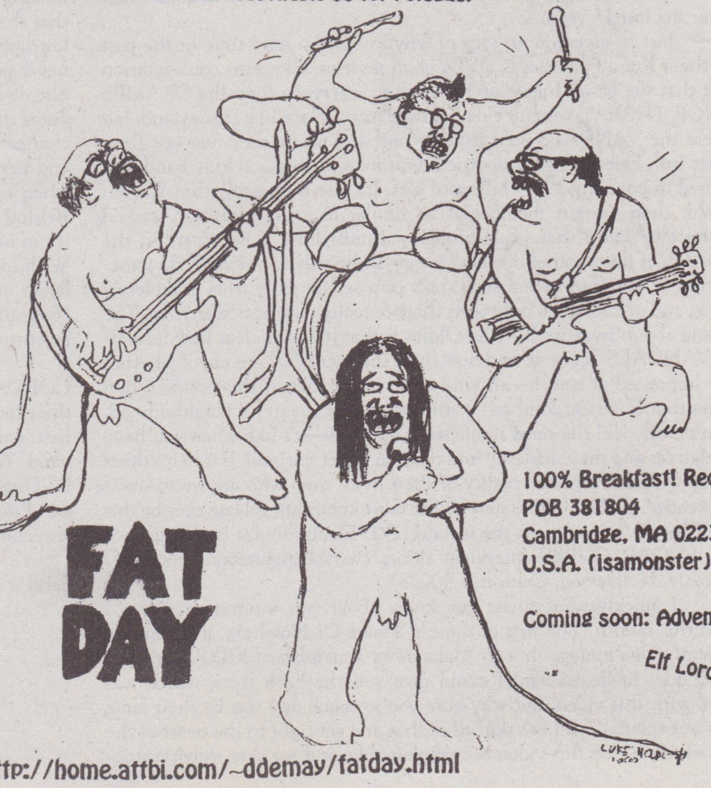

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RECORDS

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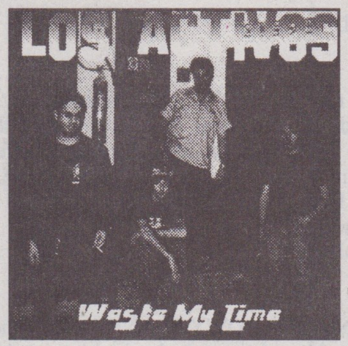


ACRO-BATS - "Kicking And Screaming" CD

A mix of punky power pop and power trio punk. Good songs with a good dynamic. Think NEIGHBORHOODS, PLIMSOULS, and YUM YUMS gone modern without the skinny ties. Good stuff. (RL)

($10 ppd: Susspool, 1269 Commonwealth Ave, Box 11, Allston, MA 02134)

LOS ACTIVOS/THE REAL SWINGERS - split EP

Anthemic, hard rock from a couple of Italian bands. Songs to shake your fists in the air to while drinking eight beers and screaming about how you don't understand why the ladies don't like you. "Cause I'm not a puppet boy, Can't pull my strings like a toy." Yeah, I hear ya. (CK)

(Nicotine, c/o Marco Cicchella, VIa Orsini 5, 80121, Napoli, ITALY, therealswinger@tiscalinet.it)

AGITATED - "Go Blue, Go Die" EP

Great thrashed-out punk rock from Cleveland, Ohio circa 1983. Buzzing guitars and thumping drums create a circle pit frenzy coming straight out of the stereo speakers. A sweet little piece of red vinyl. (RC)

(Smog Veil, 316 California Ave. #207, Reno, NV 89509)

GG ALLIN - "Gimme Some Head/Dead or Alive"

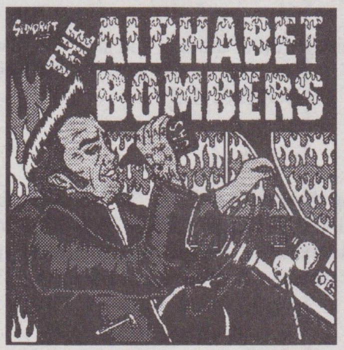
And the repro reissues keep rolling in! For the non-geeks out there, this nugget from the *Always Was, Is, And Always Shall Be*-era features Wayne Kramer and Dennis Thompson of the MC5: they aren't well served by David "The Pope Smokes Dope Every Day" Peel's lightweight production, but of course that's a large part of the entertainment value of the early, chirpy, jabbin' instead of poopin' GG. Don't know if this is legit from the original label or a boot: if the latter, kindly ignore the reproduced contact info and gawd bless. (DD)

(Orange, 639 Broadway Box 902, New York, NY 10012)

GG ALLIN & THE SCUMFUCS - "Eat My Fuc" LP

This is some sorta reissue/bootleg of old stuff Bruce sez was the re-released LP *EMF*. Yep, a young GG with his melodic punk and beautifully vile, poetic lyrics. It's hard to go wrong with "Fuckin' The Dog," "Clit Licker," and "Drink, Fight & Fuck." Inspirational to many worms. (HM)

(Toilet Rock Productions)



ALPHABET BOMBERS - "Wreckless" CD

Kind of a mixture of psychobilly and ska with guitar way too trebly for my taste and annoying affected vocals, the ALPHABET BOMBERS just don't float my boat. (DP)

(Spindrift, 1411 Washington Ave, Pomton Lakes, NJ 07442, www spindriftrecords.com)

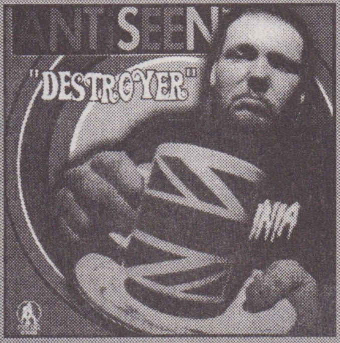
ANTIMANIAX - "As Long as People Think" CD

A mix-mash of hardcore, pop, ska, and a dash of emo, all wrapped up in melodic punk. From Austria, ANTIMANIAX keep things energetic and upbeat with positive political lyrics (there's a Chomsky sample in there) and a good variety of tempos and vocal styles. I like the more straightforward punker numbers, and I could do without the ska parts, but overall this isn't bad. (AD)

(Household Name, PO Box 12286, London SW9 6FE, UK)

ANTiSEEN - "Southern Hostility" LP

A brilliant record from the South's finest scumfuck sons. Released sometime in the early 90s and then again by Man's Ruin several years later, TKO is making sure this piece of work doesn't lose any of its luster. I cannot argue with the liner notes that declare this one of the most hostile records ever...ANTiSEEN is southern rock gone horribly wrong; ANTiSEEN is the MISFITS on a six-day amphetamine bender; ANTiSEEN is a shock rock band that doesn't want to throw shit on you, but just wants to make you shit yourself. *Southern Hostility* was my first taste of ANTiSEEN, and it still sounds just a frightening today; they aren't polite, I never want to sit down and have a beer with any of 'em, and in most circles it certainly ain't cool to like 'em, but I cannot deny the fucking unbridled power of this band. Fans already own this, but if you haven't yet taken the step into the Confederacy of Scum underworld, then look carefully to make sure that none of your "hip" friends are watching, snatch up a copy of this classic LP, and then slip quietly into the confines of your room and get a lesson in true outlaw rock and roll. (WN)
(TKO, 3126 W. Cary St. #203, Richmond, VA 23221)



ANTISEEN/LIMECELL - split 45

ANTISEEN takes on the KINKS with "Destroyer," taking a classic riff and chunking it up with lots of gruff aggro—a decent cover. On the flip, LIMECELL abducts the WHO's "The Seeker" from its Mod roots and plants it fully into American power-rock, lead guitar licks a-blazing. (Their hilarious back cover photo revisits the pork 'n' beans scene from *Tommy*, the movie.) Pressed on cool blue vinyl. Above average, for the style. (SS)
(Steel Cage, PO Box 29247, Philadelphia, PA 09125)

APATHETIC YOUTH - "Fashion Designers from the Gutter" EP

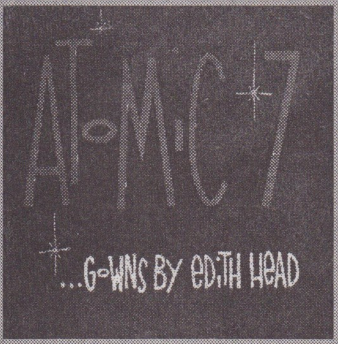
This is ripping fast hardcore from Southern California. The music is thrashy, pissed-off and raw and packed with lots of eye-watering speed. This one sided EP packs a serious punch and is worth seeking out. (RC)
(Apathetic Youth, 344 South Ash Ave, Inglewood, CA 90301)

ARROGANTA AGITATORER - "Arrongans" EP

Here we have another formerly lost piece of punk rock history for you kids to eat up, ARROGANTA AGITATORER were a nice and raw hardcore band from the nation of Sweden circa 1983. This is a legit reissue of their EP plus an extra track, and it is some pretty killer hardcore that sort of differs from the predominant Swedish sound of the time—there is much more of an American influence *a la* URBAN WASTE, POISON IDEA, or SOA than most other artifacts from that era. Pretty killer stuff, and the fine folx Busted Heads should be proud of themselves for this one. (MT)
(Busted Heads, Box 275, 901 06 Umeå, SWEDEN, www.ds13.com)

ATOMIC 7 - "Gowns by Edith Head" CD

Brian Connelly—formerly of SHADOWY MEN ON A SHADOWY PLANET—and others play something surfy and something country. All instrumental. Head bopping music, but nothing great. (CK)
(Mint, PO Box 3613, Vancouver, BC, CANADA V6B 3Y6)



ATTITUDE/NONCONFORMIST - split LP

Two bands from Slovakia here, both of which play simple, melodic, RANCID-influenced punk. NONCONFORMIST are a little gruffer, and go for more of a street punk sound, while ATTITUDE throw in bits and pieces of early eighties LA punk and even have a long-ass techno intro, but their last song fucking rips. There are traces of ska and reggae in both bands, but not in a LESS THAN JAKE way, which I am thankful for. While this is nothing to write home about, each band is unique enough to keep me interested. (MX)
(Taste of Blood, Paricovska 92, Trebisov, 075 01, SLOVAKIA)

AUTORITÄR/COMA - split EP

AUTORITÄR, from Germany, play a crusty thrash style much like a slightly slower DROP DEAD meets TOTALITÄR. Ripping and roaring. COMA, on the flip, from Sweden, are a good match to AUTORITÄR, being somewhat similar but with a much thicker guitar recording, in that Swedish-core-sound way, and a bit slower speed. Wall of violence. Both bands are great, but for my money I think that COMA wins this round. Get into it. (WM)
(Yellow Dog, PO Box 55 02 08, 10 372 Berlin, GERMANY, www.yellowdog.de)

BAD LUCK CHARMS - "Rich Girl" EP

The lyrics to "Rich Girl" led me to believe this would be full of attitude and snot, but it was kind of a midtempo repetitive disappointment. The B-side, "Ain't Gonna Be," is the gem on this release. It's faster, catchier and more anthemic street punk in the style of US BOMBS. (DP)
(TKO, 3126 W. Cary St. #303, Richmond, VA 23221)

BARSE - "Council Estate" EP

The North East's favorite sons return with a cracking three tracker. Total '77 worship bringing to mind the retarded brilliance of one single no-marks like SQUAD, SODS, and PUNCTURE, but mixing in some powerpop verve from bands like the BUZZCOCKS and the BOYS. Head bobbing stick-in-the-head tunes, the title track being the real winner here (especially for this ex-council tenant!), but all three are worthy. (TB)
(Rapid Pulse, PO Box 5075, Milford, CT 06460)

BASTA BASTA - "Uzi Rules OK" EP

Fucking great! A relentless assult of Finnish hardcore fury. Tough, raspy vocals on top of fast and chaotic, yet melodic songs that draw heavily on the influence of LAMA and RATTUS make for six songs of solid hardcore mayhem. (VH)

(Morbid, Kortelahdenkatu 19E94, 33210 Tampere, FINLAND, morbidprod@hotmail.com)

BATHTUB SHITTER - "Angels Save Us" EP

BATHTUB SHITTER immediately stood out to me upon first hearing them—one, because they completely kick ass, and two, because they're one of relatively few straight-up grindcore bands from Japan as opposed to the vastly more common thrash attack style—more like 324 and UNHOLY GRAVE. There's a lot to recommend about them, and most of it stems from a unique idiosyncratic songwriting style, which can be rare in hardcore these days. There are some odd, slower, off-time guitar parts which seem out of place at first but are actually pretty cool, and their arrangements in general are just rather unconventional. There's a lot more double bass drumming on this record than I remember previously, and the drumming overall has gotten way more brutal. Great dual guttural low and screeched high vocals which are apparently both handled by the same guy, make their sound immediately recognizable. BATHTUB SHITTER also obviously have a sense of purpose that revolves heavily, if not entirely, on shit-related humor. Their lyrics are vaguely political, but everything is conveyed through some coprophilic metaphor. The clap-along cheerleading intro is a must-hear. Needless to say, this comes highly recommended. (EL)

(Necro Obscure Terror, PO Box 27620, Nicosia, 2431, CYPRUS, rusted_lock@avacom.net)

BEANS/BBK - split EP

The singer of BBK has that voice of machismo, that at-the-pub drinking-with-me-mates sound that is getting so prevalent in punk these days. Yet he sounds kinda sensitive, too. I like him and his positive, we-can-change-things lyrics. BBK's music is a good middle of the road punky/oi sound. It wont blow your head off, but you'll probably dig it. Some bands, like FROM ASHES RISE, are better live than on vinyl. And you can tell just by hearing the potential on the record. BEANS are basically mediocre chorus-heavy, guitar-wankin' spiky punk. And they seem like they would be worse live. It almost sounds like THE ENEMIES. If BBK release anything else, give that a listen. Not this. (JA)

(www.bbkpunk.nl)

BEYOND THE SIXTH SEAL - "Earth and Sphere" CD

Absolutely destructive! BEYOND THE SIXTH SEAL bring to mind the terrorizing metallic-hardcore style of COALESCE, especially the vocals, while bringing in a grindcore element foreign to most bands of the genre, and at the same time emphasizing the dramatic elements of European black metal. Fucking heavy. (VH)

(Beyond the Sixth Seal, 151 Union St, Weymouth, MA 02190)

BIG BOYS - "Wreck Collection" 2xLP

Freaks, that in essence is what punk has always been about to me. If there was ever a bigger group of freaks than the BIG BOYS, I don't know of them. Fat, funny-looking guys who just didn't give a shit and still always managed to have fun. The BIG BOYS were always one of the definitive punk bands to me, because no matter how they fucked (or is that funked?) with the sound, they were always first and foremost punk. This is an expanded reissue of the so-called "greatest hits" package that originally appeared on producer Spot's label way back when. When I say expanded, I mean 19 added songs, including 18 that have never been released anywhere else before! This record rules! Since it's a double LP, I will say it rules again! If you have never heard the BIG BOYS before, I can't describe them, since they are truly unique and nobody else has ever even come close to capturing their sound. Just go buy this, and join the cult. …still reading? Put this down and go get this record—now! (JF)

(Gern Blandsten, PO Box 356, Rivers Edge, NJ 07661)

BLOOD SPIT NIGHTS - "Only for the Hardcore" EP

Distort-o-rama romp through four tracks of ripping studs-and-spikes-fueled hardcore. Insane demon-from-the-bowels-of-hell vocals (think SEPTIC DEATH meets GISM) wailing over a whirlwind of blown-out guitars and drums. Total fucking GAI/CONFUSE worship going on here, and this angry punker loves every blistering second of it. (MT)

($4 ppd: Spent Round, 1951 W. Burnside #1706, Portland, OR 97209)

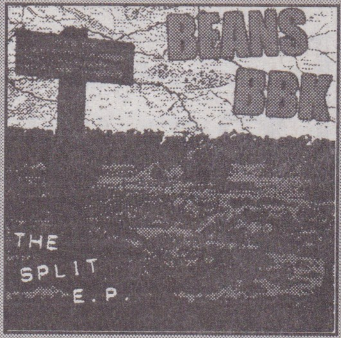
BLOWBACK - "Remember Oneself" CD

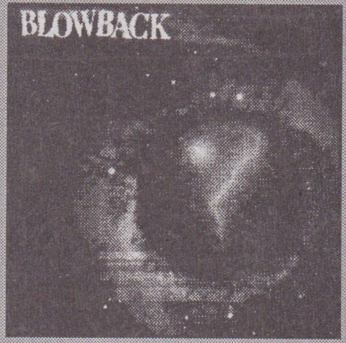
A four-song CDEP from Japan's BLOWBACK, It's solid, intense, generally mid-paced hardcore in the tradition of American bands from the 90s. Definately a metal influence, but these guys have too much energy to fit into any scene other than punk. Nothing really grabs me, but they are heavy on the sing-along parts, which I could see easily growing on a person after a few more listens. (VH)

(HG Fact, 105 Nakano Shinbashi-m, 2-17-15, Yayoi-cho, Nakano, Tokyo, 164-0013, JAPAN)

BOB BARKER YOUTH/AND I CAN'T WAIT - split LP

Two bands from Massachusetts that seem to share a common member who moved away, breaking up both bands. This appears to be a document of this commonality, and is a small press of 400 copies with silk-screened recycled record covers. BOB BARKER YOUTH play super-distorted





power-violence with a touch of noisecore. Out of fucking control! AND I CAN'T WAIT play catchy distorted hardcore with a straight-edge girl singer (whose throat must be on fire!) that brings to mind SCROTUM GRINDER (the singers sound fairly alike) mixed with the current crop of thrash heavyweights (DS-13, TEAR IT UP!, E.T.A., etc). I've listened to this record a lot since I got it, and each time that I listen to one side I think it's my favorite side until I flip the record over and think that that side is my favorite (actually, I like AICW's side a bit more than BBY—but both are great!). Comes with an insert for each band—BBY's has text on vegetarianism and Food Not Bombs. Find this! Highly recommended! (WM)
($5: Matt Lieber, 454 59th St, Oakland, CA 94609, www.geocities.com/andicantwait, www.geocities.com/bobbarkerds13)

BORN BAVARIAN - "Fucking in the Butt" EP

Yee haw! Steel Cage Records has another fucking blue ribbon winner on its hands! BORN BAVARIAN put their German twist on a first rate DAVID ALAN COE song, "Fucking in the Butt," with some enjoyable dirty lyrics. On the flipside of this Steel Cage beauty, you get a BORN BAVARIAN original, "White Blue Trash." These guys take the influences of veterans like LEFTY FRIZZELL, BUCK OWENS, MERLE HAGGARD, and HAMMERLOCK, and turn them into Community of Filth, European-style country material. The guitar caterwauls like crazy, the tough guy vocals make you cringe, and the whole nasty mess works real good! (BR)
(Steel Cage, PO Box 29247, Philadelphia, PA 19125, www.steelcagerecords.com)

CANNIBAL & THE HEADHUNTERS - "Land of 1,000 Dances" LP

....well I guess you can call this a re-ish of a classic SoCal record.....these homeboys got killer voices BUT most of this shit is JUST A BUNCH OF THE SAME OLD STANDARD COVERS!!!!! ....what can I say???......they did however pen the big hit here.....the world-wide commercial well covered jingle-song.....you know, the one that goes; Naaaaaaaa-Na-Na-Na-Na, Na-Na-Na-Na, Na-Na-Na-Naaaaaaaa!!!!! That one.....it's on here too......1965......Shrine Auditorium, baby.....years before JACK BRUCE graced the stage.....all brought to you by the fine folks at Dionysus quality control-central.....yes indeed..... (SW)
(Dionysus, PO Box 1975, Burbank, CA 91507, www.dionysusrecords.com)

CAPITALIST CASUALTIES - "Disassembly Line" LP

Along with a few other records, *Disassembly Line* defined power-violence practically before SPAZZ even knew each other. Hardcore in general has progressed so much in the last ten years, and often I go back and listen to a record that "blew my mind" when I first heard it, and now it just sounds weak and pathetic...but I would put this record up against any other hardcore record today, and CAPITALIST CASUALTIES would slay nearly every one of them. 21 songs full of hatred and disgust for the system that allows the upper classes to flourish while the masses wallow in the leftovers. The drums are incredible, fucking machines with guitar and bass turning the wheels, and I am still amazed when I see how many words Shawn can cram into a 45 second song. If a record can be a classic after only ten years, then *Disassembly Line* should be at the top of the list. This band changed hardcore. (WN)
(Six Weeks, 225 Lincoln Avenue, Cotati, CA 94931)

CAPTAIN CRUNCH - "Back in Blue" EP

All right, it says here these guys are from Oakland and have been around for quite a while, but I've been around these parts all my life and I have never heard their name anywhere. This strikes me strange because I have had my ear to the local pop punk underground since my voice cracked. These guys aren't awful, they just aren't good. They have potential but they need to work on those lyrics. Godawful, man. I know pop punk is supposed to be a little braindead, but c'mon, you guys are like fucking 30 and you are writing about a "Mean Teacher" and covering ENYA. Knock it off. (BM)
(Short Hare, PO Box 283, San Francisco, CA 94104, www.blacktieunderground.com)

CAPTAIN CRUNCH - "Back in Blue" EP

CAPTAIN CRUNCH were a couple of RAMONES-obsessed guys from Santa Cruz who toured a little and put out two really good EPs in the early 90s before getting on with their lives. They just released some old material and some new songs on this and another EP under the name FLESH PACKS, also reviewed in this issue. The music is in the RAMONES style with the can't sing vocals similar to MTX. (DP)
(Short Hare, PO Box 283, San Francisco, CA 94104, www.blacktieunderground.com)

CAPTAIN EVERYTHING - "Learning to Play with..." CD

Before I start this review, I must clear something up: when I say something resembles *Dude Ranch*-era BLINK 182, I mean that as a sincere compliment. It means that your band has something extra-special that makes you stand out from the literally hundreds of Fat Wreck-esque bands. With that out of the way...this resembles *Dude Ranch*-era BLINK 182. Ultra fast, slightly lo-fi guitar sound with a hint of ska, and lyrics that haven't yet taken the plunge into "totally juvenile." Bonus points for making fun of bands whose names are puns involving the word "ska." (MX)
(Household Name, PO Box 12286, London, SW9 6FE, UK, www. householdnamerecords.co.uk)

THE CASANOVAS - "10 Outta 10" EP

"10 Outta 10" is a mid tempo AC/DC-style blues rocker with lots of tasty hooks. The flip side kicks it up a notch belting out two full-throttle 70s rock and roll ditties. An excellent record! (HM)
(Full Toss, PO Box 4171, Richmond East, Victoria 3121, AUSTRALIA, thecasanovas@hotmail.com)

CATHODE - "A Machine That Never Falters" LP

Brutal dark hardcore that brings to mind bands like CATHARSIS and GEHENNA. The music combines super heavy slow parts and fast charging bursts of rage. Harsh in-your-face vocals spit out thoughtful yet angry lyrics. There is definitely some quality shit to be found here. (RC)
(Mark Van De Maat, Nijlandstraat 55, 7462 RZ Rijssen, NETHERLANDS; markvdmaat@hotmail.com)

CHAINSAW - "Believe" CD

Japanese hardcore heads with a rough edge and a melodic inner core. They enjoy shout-alongs and super wanky guitar solos at the end of their songs. Gruff vocals, lyrics in both English and Japanese. The third song makes me think of mid-period LIPCREAM sans the gang chorus. Four songs proper on this MCD with an "Intro" and "Outro." (WM)
(Six Weeks, 225 Lincoln Ave, Cotati, CA 94931)

CHANNEL 3 - "CH 3" CD

My former label mates circa 1983 return with an LP of new material. 15 or so years since their last studio full length. The singer and guitar player remain intact. I must say this is pretty good, considering the time away. Still sticking to mostly two types of songs: speedy catchy melodic hardcore songs and CLASH/DOA slower type songs. Great production too. A strong return from this SoCal band. Fans will like this, and you youngsters might learn a thing or two. (RL)
(Dr. Strange)

CHEERAKS - "Miss Bretzel" EP

I dunno dick about the CHEERAKS or what they're supposed to sound like (either lobotomized rhythm & blues, spooky haunted-house rock 'n' roll, or GG ALLIN pervo porno). I do know that they're out for a bad time at your expense, and that they produce a big ugly noise that can't be dismissed politely. "Ah Ah Ah (Dirty Old Town)" is fun trash...as is "I Love Hair Dryer Noise." I picture the band as half-evolved Neanderthalers in silver lamé space suits—it's that cave-meets-rocketship appeal you get when worlds collide. Boss. (JH)
(Yakisakana, 51 Rue Pierre Renaudel, 76100 Rouen, FRANCE, www.yakisakanarecrods.fr.st)

CIDER BREAKFAST - "Anti-Patriotic Frankenstein" CD

Really stupid punk from France. Some of the worst lyrics I've ever heard sung over generic hardcore punk. It's remarkable; they actually manage to encapsulate almost everything I detest about the current state of punk. (AD)
(Dirty Punk, BP 302, 59666 Villeneuve D'Ascq Cedex, FRANCE)

THE CLEOPATRAS - "Let's Run With the Cleopatras" EP

Super catchy garage rock from some Italian women. It's very poppy in the 60s girl group way. Reminds me of the PLEASURE SEEKERS or 5678s. Great stuff. (CK)
(Perdurobo, Luca Rossi, Via Zanoia, 4, 28887 Omegna (VB), ITALY, sncusio@tin.it)

THE CLEOPATRAS - "The Time Has Come" EP

Talk about value for the money! These Italian (didn't know the Egyptology fad was still big in the former Roman Empire) garage gals manage to get five songs on a 45 rpm 7" (*MRR* dicatates that any >2 track 7" is an EP, regardless of speed, so don't complain to me)! That's half an LP in the old days. The two guitars don't cut through as much as I'd like, but the performances have an appealing moodiness (especially the brooding vocals-no pun intended) that's refreshing. Note TRASHWOMEN cover and the lack of a physical contact address: it's the band of the future, today! (DD)
(The Cleopatras, cleopatra@cyber.dada.it)

CLIFTON LEE MANN W/CHRIS JONES - "The State I'm In/The Driver"

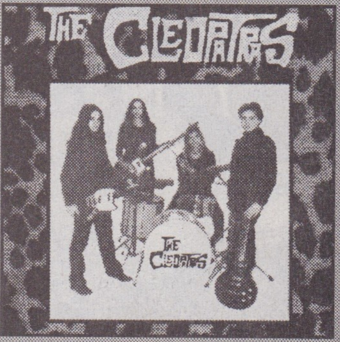
Christ, I dunno know what to say or think about this one. "The State I'm In" is kinda dullish and reminds me of any number of other bands I've seen, heard, and walked away from. "The Driver" is a little peppier but doesn't really shake it for me with its fuzzy surf guitar and air of quiet desperation. Not all that happening. (JH)
(Demonbeach, PO Box 6693, Raleigh, NC 27628-6693)

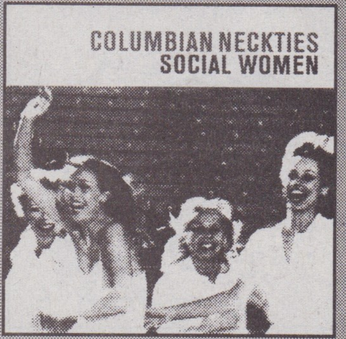
THE COLUMBIAN NECKTIES - "Social Women/Pocket Rock"

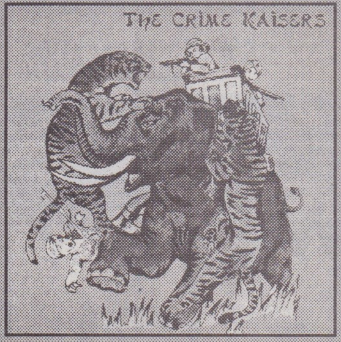
Rock and fucking roll, that's what this is. Man, the Scandinavians can really rock, no joke. Lately it's been all about the Swedes and Norwegians. Now the Danes have decided they want to get in on the action. These guys come out of the gates rocking and they don't look back. It's catchy. It's faster paced. It's compelling. It's rock. It's punk. And it kicks ass. This is old school punk 'n' roll that borrows from the best of 50s, 60s, and 70s rock/punk. Highest recommendation. (KK)
(Stereodriveirec., von-Steubenstr. 17, 48143 Muenster, GERMANY)

COLUMBIAN NECKTIES - "Why Change Your Moves" LP

Wooo! Yeah-ya! Alright! The COLUMBIAN NECKTIES plow you down with a full force rock 'n' roll attack that could only originate in Scandanavia. Ivan the Terrible must of had a similar soundtrack on his ship's stereo when the vikings conquered and pilaged the world a few hundred years ago. They took no prisoners then and neither do the NECKTIES now. Has someone created a new sub-genre for this sound yet? This record is GLUECIFER, the HELLACOPTERS, and AC-DC on speed....or maybe just the BASEBALL FURIES wearing clean underpants. I'm not sure which, but either way it's good. (AS)
(Sounds of Subterrania, PO Box 103662, 34036 Kasel, GERMANY)







CONDEMNED 2 DEATH - "You Can't Kill a Vatrat" CD

I feel silly for never previously knowing of San Francisco's CONDEMNED 2 DEATH, when hearing these 40 tracks of blazing 80s American hardcore. This release contains various tracks from '83 and '84, and includes extensive liner notes, for dummies like me who missed out... (VH)

(Grand Theift Audio, 501 W. Glenoaks Blvd, PMB 313, Glendale, CA 91202)

CONFUSE - "New God Old God" LP

Say what you will about bootlegs (and I certainly have my reservations), but this record (as well as the GAUZE and G.I.S.M. boots which came from the same folks, I believe) is a perfect example of what a bootleg *should* be. Good sound quality (well, as good as CONFUSE can get anyway), extra care taken in the mastering and pressing, and super comprehensive booklet that gives us flyers, pictures and a *complete* discography, including all the shitty boots that came before before this one (even that godawful CD that sounded like it was being played through a paper bag and wasted ten of my dollars). CONFUSE are the kings of noisy chaotic Japanese hardcore, and that is superbly represented here with 1984's *Indignation* demo (later released as an LP) and a live set from the end of that year. It's messy as hell, white noise and feedback are all over the place, the drums are often just a wall of cymbals and a snare drum, and the chaos seems never ending. The only rest comes when you flip the record over. This is a perfect introduction to CONFUSE, and a perfect addition for collectors who cannot find or afford the records. Bootleggers: make 'em all this good, and the debate over unauthorized releases will quiet down in a hurry. (WN)

(no address)

CONTRAVENE - "A Call to Action" LP

Anarcho-punks from Arizona who are not the least bit scared of long acoustic intros and tasteful guitar leads. In the tradition of DIRT and (especially) NAUSEA, CONTRAVENE play a slightly more metal and slightly more melodic variety of political hardcore, but this has all the elements that fans of the genre love. At times more influenced by IRON MAIDEN than by MANKIND?, these seven tracks fill a void caused by loads of hardcore bands that took to being "evil" and left behind the politics that set them apart from the rest of the schlock. While not straying too far outside of the punk rock political mainstream (anti-consumer driven society, anti-institution of marriage, anti-objectification of women to sell cars), CONTRAVENE's well thought-out lyrics are presented at length in the extensive booklet full of words and other pertinent information, and well delivered by powerful female leads and effective male back up growls. Their EP from earlier this year is awesome, and this full length certainly steps up to the next level. (WN)

(Tribal War, 1951 W. Burnside #1936, Portland, OR 97209)

COUNTY Z - "There Goes the Neighborhood" EP

Loose, sloppy, catchy, and confrontational. "Art" punk in the best sense, a band that seems to just jump into their vaguely Rough Trade label-influenced sound with both eyes wide open. Shamble City. Three songs that are a musical imitation of a singing drunken poet sliding down a wall. A tense mess. Girl vocals that are pissed without whining. They have an LP that I have to track down now, excuse me... (RW)

($3ppd: New Audio Terror, PO Box 8024, Minneapolis, MN 55408)

CRAMPS - "You Betta Duck" LP

Live in Canada in 1984. Off the sound board on peachish-cumstain vinyl. What the fuck else do you want me to say? If you love this band and can find this, buy if. If you don't, well, then why are you reading this? (BM)

(Alien)

THE CRIME KAISERS - LP

No, they don't sound like CRIME, nor the KAISERS. More like wall of guitarish poppish punk band that would probably bristle at being tarred with the pop punk brush. They're likely aiming for DILLINGER FOUR territory, although the presence of organ lends a certain GRAHAM BOND ORGANIZATION feel (a big descriptive help to you kids, I'm sure). (DD)

(Stereodrive!, von-Steuben-Sttr.17, 48143 Meunster, GERMANY, www.greenhell.de)

CYNICS - "Living is the Best Revenge" CD

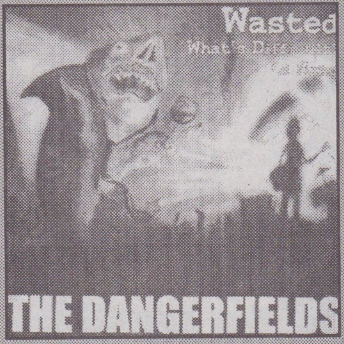
Well, they've been at it longer than I care to remember. The CYNICS are, of course, the long-standing B-team rock 'n' roll band that have aren't making a comeback 'cause they've never really gone away. *Living is the Best Revenge* is a short & sweet statement of the band's purpose: simple, R&B driven 1960s-style rock 'n' roll with words that display more emotional depth than you'd expect from a bunch of garage yobbos. "Marianne," "Turn Me Loose," "Ballad of J.C. Holmes," and their cover of the SATANS' "Makin' Deals" don't offer much in the way of suprises, but they're still entertaining on a gut level. (JH)

(Get Hip, PO Box 666, Canonsburg, PA 15317, www.gethip.com)

DFI - "Casting the Genetic Vote" CD

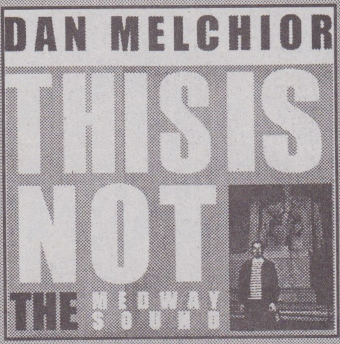
As far as I can tell, DFI write concept songs. By knowing the song title, I can imagine the musical interpretation DFI creates. The synthesizers and electronic drums are effective in accom-

panying the guitar, but are a little overwhelming on a few tunes. Something tells me this is some sorta guitar nerd one-man-band/project, and the cute nerd with a bloody nose on the cover is the one called DFI. Includes a seven-minute bonus guitar solo. Impressively overbearing. (HM)
(Honey Bear, 1071 Clayton Ln. #506, Austin, TX 78723, didonatofromillinios@yahoo.com)



DANGERFIELDS/MIUKU - split EP

The DANGERFIELDS are from Belfast and they're basically a bar band, loved by drunks, one and all. MIUKU, on the other hand is a more international band, with members from Ireland, Scotland, England, and Finland. They can't play their instruments as well as the DANGERFIELDS, but they more than make up for that. This is the kind of lo-fi music that I crave with high squealy vocals, some in English and some in Finnish. (DP)
(PO Box 1343, Belfast BT15 4HX, N. IRELAND, UK, www.the_dangerfields.tk, lemenace@angelfire.com)



DAN MELCHIOR - "This Is Not the Medway Sound" LP

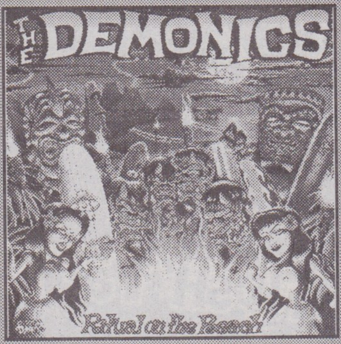
DAN MELCHIOR has the best voice in rock and roll. I can (and will) listen to it all day. It's one of the many advantages he has over other bands. He also writes great songs. Another advantage. His two records with the BROKE REVUE are my favorites. Here he presents what he calls the Bedsitter Boogie, more subdued, yet equally rockin' songs he recorded in his bedroom.. Check out "Ridiculous Man" for a truly great bluesy garage tune that displays a subtle obnoxious punk attitude. "I'm Trying" is another great one. Dan made his name playing with BILLY CHILDISH and HOLLY GOLIGHTLY, but continues to prove himself as a great talent. Recently Dan came to San Francisco. He played a show with the Broke Revue at one place and when he was done he walked down the street and played a solo set at another. How many of your heroes would do that? Yeah, DAN MELCHIOR is the best. (CK)
(Smart Guy, 3288 21st St. #32, San Francisco, CA 94110, smart012@smartguyrecords.com)

DEADFALL - "Meathead" EP

DEADFALL has been playing a lot around the Bay Area, and I still haven't gotten to see them, but this record definitely makes me excited to see them next weekend. I have been hearing NEGATIVE APPROACH and URBAN WASTE comparisons, and they are well justified. There are also moments where it is thrashier, reminding me of more recent stuff like TEAR IT UP (the vocals, especially) and DOWN IN FLAMES, although I don't think that they are taking from those bands at all. This is straight from 1981. I fucking love this record. I am so excited to have a band like this in the Bay Area. So...what are you waiting for? (WR)
(Controlled By Plague, PO Box 22641, San Francisco, CA 94122, scottykarate@hotmail.com)

DEAN DIRG - LP

DEAN DIRG, whose insert art places him stylistically in LA punk circa '82, is well-worthy of the vintage. The sound is a fast, intense variant of Henry Rollins-era BLACK FLAG, with abrasive vocals and kick-ass guitars. The sound, happily, is sharp and raw, and every song has fast, muscular riffing that serve as a powerful backdrop for DEAN DIRG's aggro-fest lyrics. Individual songs don't necessarily stand out as "hits," but this is an outstanding release, start to finish. (SS)
(Oliver Sander, Rellinghausterstr 214, 45136 Essen, GERMANY)



DEMONICS - "Ritual on the Beach" LP

Our local "Demons of the Drag-Strip" have traded in their choppers and muscle cars for surf boards and woodies. This is fucking fantastic. This is the soundtrack to the greatest surf movie that was never made. You can twist, shimmy, shake, and groove to the exciting sounds of the DEMONICS. Sure it's the dead of winter and the SF Bay breeze is like an icy tongue on my neck, but I can't help wanting to go to the beach. Guest star NIKKI CORVETTE lays down some sassy vocals on their rendition of her tune, "Boys Like Me." "Aloha Oe" is also redone, and let me tell you this is no novelty track—they actually do it well. Mixing the beach sounds of and ultra sexed up and drunk BEACH BOYS, and the hot rod, big rock guitar sound, these guys have all the bases covered. They can croon, they can wank, they can even write a purddy slow song. This is by far my favorite DEMONICS release. (BM)
(Alien Snatch, Morikeweg 1, 74199 Untergruppenbach, GERMANY, www.aliensnatch.de, demonics@earthlink.net)

DIRT BIKE ANNIE/POPSTERS - split CD

NY's DIRT BIKE ANNIE keep the amateur pop punk coming. Good stuff as usual. ITALY's POPSTERS do their poppy thing not unlike FIFTEEN and even RHYTHM COLLISION, if that makes sense. A good split. (RL)
(Stardumb, www.stardumbrecords.com)

DISGUST - "The Horror of it All" CD

Boy, it's pretty tough to figure out where DISGUST are coming from. But I'll give it a shot anyway—let's see, perhaps a slight DISCHARGE influence? Besides the fact that they're British and put an album out on Earache about ten years ago, I don't know what else to say. If you like the endless legions of Dis-clones you'll like this. If you're looking for some originality in your music, well... that's clearly not the intent. (EL)
(Crimes Against Humanity, PO Box 1421, Eau Claire, WI 54702-1421, www.cahrecords.com)

DUAL EXHAUST - "River City Hellride" CD

This is muscle car rock with a little MOTORHEAD influence. I wasn't loving it at first, but after a couple of listens, it's growing on me. I can definitely see myself cruising Hwy 61 with the windows down, wind whipping through my hair and this CD blasting. (DP)
($10 ppd: Cellar, 633 W. Galena Ave, Freeport, IL 61032, dualexhaust_oml@yahoo.com)

EKKAIA "Manos Que Estrechan..." CD

Listening to this CD brings back a lot of memories, calling to mind the harsh, abrasive side of the mid 90s emo hardcore scene. EKKAIA apear to be from Spain. But lack of English translations give me little to go on. For fans of FINGERPRINT or early Ebullition bands, a great listen. (VH)
(Difusion, 18251 Madrid, 28080 Madrid, SPAIN, laidea@sindios.net)

ENCYCLOPEDIA OF AMERICAN TRAITORS - CD

Discography of this political hardcore/screamo/emo-violence/whatever band including a bunch of comp songs and 7"s, including their split with ORCHID. This guy has a pretty incredible screaming voice—I mean he really belts out his lyrics with vocal-cord-shredding abandon. Musically this reminded me a bit of the likes of REVERSAL OF MAN and PALATKA, though I understand these guys might pre-date them (sorry, don't know much about 'em). I liked the overall energy and discordant fury (occasionally taking the songs to grindcore tempos)—but this style in general doesn't do much for me. However, that being said—this seems like pretty quality material for fans of the (sub)genre. (EL)
(S-H-O-V-E, Manuel Piacenza via Don Minzoni 3 15100, Alessandria, ITALY, manpia@tin.it)

EXTRAS - "Ugly Americans" CD

Compilation of an upstate New York band that got a track on the *Hudson Rock* comp back in 1982 then disappeared off the face of the earth. Their stuff dates from a June 1982 session, but there's no hardcore influence; it's all straight-ahead early 80s punk that sounds a lot like the stuff coming out of the Midwest on numerous singles at the time. Standout tracks are "Why Do You Think They Call it Dope," "This Generation Doesn't Judge," and "She's Got Bugs." Solid stuff. Really fucked up band story detailing the police bust of a member on a totally staged drug buy. Very relevant stuff here folks! (RW)
(Last Vestige, www.lastvestige.com)

FARSE - "Boxing Clever" CD

I guess this kind of music is called "skacore." Nuff said. This is "skacore" from Birmingham (England, not Alabama), I don't really want to dis them too much, but this really sucks. Do people actually listen to this kind of shit? Boy is my thumb not on the pulse of today's youth. I'm wondering, is "farse" to girls what "barse" is to boys??? (AD)
(Moon Ska Europe, PO Box 184, Ashford, Kent, TN240ZS, UK)

FIRE NEXT TIME - "Sound of a Threat" CD

I know when I say the words "screamy emo hardcore," a good number of you are going to put down the magazine and gag repeatedly. When you're finished gagging, you should give this record a try. I normally don't have the patience for this sort of thing, but the FIRE NEXT TIME grabbed me. Their message is strictly political, and quotations from famous leftist figures abound in the insert, but they aren't just chosen randomly; each one fairly clearly articulates the meaning of the corresponding song. In addition, the music maintains a level of straightforward punk intensity that prevents boredom. I could have done without the six-minute acoustic instrumental, but I'll forgive them just this once. A good release. (MX)
(Dim Mak, PO Box 14041, Santa Barbara, CA 93107, www.dimmak.com)

FIVE KNUCKLE - "Lost for Words, Far from Speechless" CD

If you took the discordant finesse of AT THE DRIVE IN and mixed it with the ska-core intensity of LINK 80, you would get FIVE KNUCKLE. Yeah, that sentence gets funnier everytime I read it too. (CC)
(Household Name, PO Box 12286, London, SW9 6FE, UK)

FLASHLIGHT BROWN - "All that Glitters is Mold" CD

With all the markings of a Fat Wreck-style band, this could have been pretty putrid. Instead, they stretch beyond the "tits & ass" humor into truly geeky territory, such as pro-skateboarder idol worship. Plus, lines such as "check out my sickly cave tan" and "we may not know any girls but we've got graph paper guiding the way" make me smile. (MX)
(Double A, www.flashlightbrown.com)

FLESH PACKS - "Malicious Fast & Furious Bar Chords" EP

Excellent "Otter Pop" packaging adorns this clear disc while the FLESH PACKS load up on post adolescent themes over guitar driven pop punk. This four-song EP starts off strong, slips a little, but ends strong. Worth checking out. (HM)
(Black Tie Underground, 6114 La Salle Ave #528, Oakland, CA 94611, www.blacktieunderground.com)

FUCKING VIRGINS - "Hardur...Speluhh!!! Snellur..." CD

Straightforward punk rock, slightly melodic, with snotty vocals. Basic repeating chord progressions. No lyrics to work from. They like the DEAD KENNEDYS. Nothing really stands out here. Sorry. (WR)

(www.fuckingvirgins.sucks.nl)

GETAWAY - "What Can You Do?" CD

Goddammit, I want to hate this so much but it just won't let me. True, they sound and look as if they're destined for major label stardom and will be on a package tour with SUM 41 and AVRIL LAVIGNE, but damned if they don't know exactly what hooks to use to get those songs stuck in my head. Melodic punk for teenyboppers, but I suppose I'm a bit of a teenybopper at heart, so fuck it. I like it, but that doesn't mean you should. (MX)

(Re-define, 28 Industrial St. Unit 116, Toronto, Ontario, M4G 1Y9, CANADA, www.re-define.com)

GHOULIES - "Communication" CD

Everything about this release is top notch: the sound, the songwriting, the lyrics, the rockin' solos, the polyp inducing vocals. This is straight up rock and roll, no fuckin' around here. Fans of that Scandanavian sound take note. (DP)

(Rockstar, Verbindungsstrasse 9, 52080 Aachen, GERMANY)

THE GIRLS - "Live At The Rathskeller 5.17.79" CD

I know this band from their art punk single from 1979. This is so-so for a live show, sound quality-wise. No remote studio, but no boom box recording either. From the school of MISSION OF BURMA and PERE UBU, you take what you can get from this Boston band. I'll take this for its good art punk qualities. (RL)

(Abaton Book Company, 100 Gifford Ave, Jersey City, NJ 07304, www.albatonbookcompany.com)

GODSTOMPER - "Emo Attitude Sucks" EP

A noisy live radio set from '99 from this prolific West Bay grind duo. The sound quality's about the same as most of their studio material, i.e. pretty shitty, and the songs are rather unremarkable, other than being really fast and noisy, which you probably already knew. This falls into the "unessential" category of record-buying priorities. (EL)

(Glory Hole, 5815 E. Pinyon Pine Dr, Orange, CA 92869)

GODSTOMPER/NAPALM DEATH - split EP

The newest installment in GODSTOMPER's Lifetime Vinyl Release Plan has arrived and if y'r a fan of this two-man bass and drum devastation squad, then y'r a happy hardcore grinder—like myself. Three songs on the GODSTOMPER side; their cover of DOOM's "Police Bastard" is one of the best GODSTOMPER songs I've heard to date while their cover of SLAYER is not—it should've been left to their live set, thinks I. On the flip, NAPALM DEATH, decent-to-really-good live boot material, all pre-'90, two of the tracks are listed as having S.O.B. on 'em, and radio interview snippets. Brutal. (WM)

(no address)

GOIN' PLACES - "Girl Songwriting 101" CD

Really boring and generic pop punk. Some please kindly tell these kids to shut the fuck up. I'm embarrassed for the both of us. This is everything cliche about pop punk. Shy guy and hopelessly pathetic lyrics, slick production, keyboard breaks, songs that start slow then stop and start again in double time, duel vocals. Yawn! Produced by Mass Giorgini and Joe Queer sings on a song. These guys my have all the Mutant Poppers sucking them off. And I'm sure all the high school girls and Warped Tour afficionados are lining up to lick their assholes, but these guys could never get rad with me. (BM)

(Coldfront, PO Box 8345, Berkeley, CA 94707, www.coldfront.com)

GRIMPLE - "Up Your Ass" LP

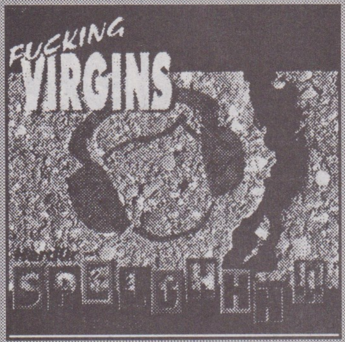
Recorded in 1992, this record is an all time classic of East Bay/Santa Fe amalgam punk. Music so raw and fun you just knew they would never go metal and boring. Lyrics so inspired and relevant I knew these kids were gonna stay true to the scene forever. They would continue to help create our community. Well, I, and we, were wrong about all that. Buncha wannabe gang bangers and macho construction workers playing shitty groove metal these days. However, let's forget that and turn this here 12" up fucking loud and rock out to a band that helped birth us all! God, it's pure punk rock without spiky hair pretensions or dreadlocked gloom depressions. Four kids who could play beautiful music cuz they were beautiful, young, pissed, happy punks from the deserts of New Mexico. (JA)

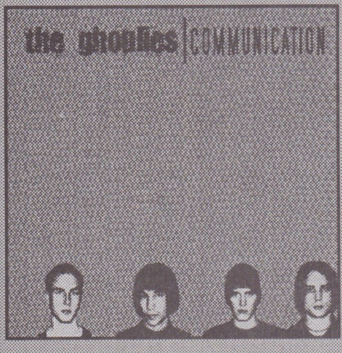
(Prank, PO Box 410892, San Francisco, CA 94141-0892)

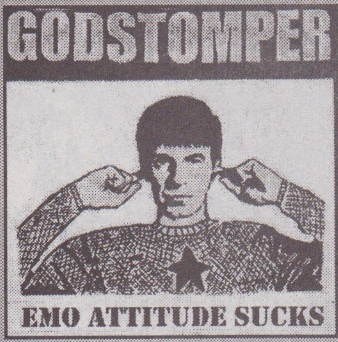
THE GROUT - "Do it Yourself" EP

Apparantly this record makes record collectors poo their pants, but that stuff doesn't mean much to me. Like a lot of super collectable stuff, this isn't as good as people would have you believe. Basic '77 snotty English punk rock that's more amusing than infectious, nothing spectacular. I like that the bass player is called "Steve Sinister" though. (AD)

(no address)







HÄVÄISTYS/EFFIGY - split EP

Hailing from Finland, HÄVÄISTYS remind me a bit of early SACRILEGE mixed with APPENDIX—driving, distorted hardcore with slight metallic overtones. Nice raw production values makes it a keeper. On the flip we have Japan's EFFIGY, doing a smashing take on the AXE-GRINDER/AMEBIX/late 80s UK stench-core thing complete with monster vocal delivery. Brutal punk attack to be found here my friends! (MT)
(Whispers In Darkness, PO Box 40113, Portland, OR 97240-0113)

HEARTWORK - "Anything Dry" EP

Presented for your enjoyment, four tracks of powerful hardcore from Japan. Punchy buzzsaw guitar attack combined with quick-paced anthemic riffing layered over snarled vocal delivery make this a winner. Put down that generic East Coast hawd-kaw record now and stick the money in the envelope now, or curse yourself in times to come. (MT)
(Cadmium Sick, PO Box 35934, Brighton, MA 02135, distortboston@hotmail.com or Dewa c/o Yuuichi Onodera, 89-11 Ishinada Tonojima, Tsuruoha Yamagata, 997-0815 JAPAN, dewarecords@mx51.et.tiki.ne.jp)

THE HENTCHMEN - "Three Times Infinity" CD

I always thought the HENTCHMEN sounded completely different from this. Weren't they a frat rock band before? Maybe I'm thinking of someone else. Now they sound trendy. Fast, punky garage guitars with whiny, disaffected, lethargic-so-I'm-laying-on-the-floor vocals. But then there's a song about a LeSabre that meshes with my memories. Hmmm. Anyway, I like it. Most of the tracks sound a lot like the CLONE DEFECTS. Maybe they've been hanging out. (CK)
(Norton, Box 646 Cooper Station, New York, NY 10276)

HERESIA/GRITOS DE ALERTA - split EP

Brasilian punks continue to amaze!! HERESIA come blasting off this split record with three tracks of downtuned D-beat madness. Awesome stuff. GRITOS de ALERTA are less D-beat, more hardcore, and just as great. There is nothing revolutionary on this wax, but there is a shitload of fucking raw ripping hardcore...I love it!! Piss yellow vinyl, mailorder yours today, and check out what South American punks have to offer. (WN)
(U.D.S. c/o Fabio do Valle, Caixa Postal 155, CEP 09910-970, Diadema SP BRASIL)

HOLDING ON/COALITION - split EP

I have been wearing out the HOLDING ON side of this record since I picked up a copy at Posi-Numbers Fest this past summer. These three songs of politically aware, fast hardcore/punk are tiding me over until the LP comes out on Bridge 9. Hopefully when that LP hits, HOLDING ON will finally get the attention they deserve (Karl, you're going to owe me a dinner). As far as COALITION goes, I'll be honest by saying that this was the first time I listened to their side. COALITION play a similar style of hardcore with a slight metal influence and more personal lyrics. A good introduction to a Michigan band that I wasn't previously familiar with. Artwork by Michael Bukowski to boot. (CC)
(Martyr, PO Box 955 Harriman, NY 10926-0955)

THE HOPE CONSPIRACY - "No Love Goes Unpunished" EP

I have been meaning to check this band out for a long time, so I was super excited to get this record for review. There are two songs on the record. Only one is an original, and it is fucking great. The music is hard to pinpoint (my favorite kind of music). It is heavy in the way AMERICAN NIGHTMARE is heavy, with an undeniable hardcore influence, but the rhythms are not straightforward, reminding me of BANE. Besides the hardcore aspects, there is a lot of melody which leaks through. A really good song. Although maybe it's not an appropriate comparison, the band sounds like a heavier versoion of The INSURGENT. The second song is a cover of my favorite NAKED RAYGUN song, "Treason," which is well done. Side B of the record is an etching which is nice, but this definitely leaves me wanting to hear more. (WR)
(Bridge 9, PO Box 990052, Boston, MA 02199, www.bridge9.com)

I.A.F./RÄHÄKKÄ -split EP

Two bands—one from Spain, the other from Finland—thrashing away the night in the style made famous by the likes of KAAOS or those Spanish madmen MG-15. Raw garagey recording with vocals that are snarled out over that driving D-beat attack. Personally, I like the RÄHÄKKÄ a bit more as the dual vocal assault adds an extra layer of energy and intensity to the mix. This is pretty awesome stuff. (MT)
(Bad Society, c/o Roberto Garcia, Apdo 6213, 41080 Sevilla, SPAIN, idiotizacion@hotmail.com)

ICONOCLAST - "1983" EP

This is the ICONOCLAST, from southern California around the early 80s. They were that peculiar form of peace punk that existed up and down the West Coast back then. CRUCIFIX is probably the best known of them, and for sure influenced these guys. Dark poetry. Heavy, grindy music. Hollow, yelled vocals. If this is the only ICONOCLAST record you can find, buy it for sure. It is a slice of punk from when politics and anarchism and animal rights were an important part of the punk scene. (JA)
(no address)

IDLE YOUTH - CD

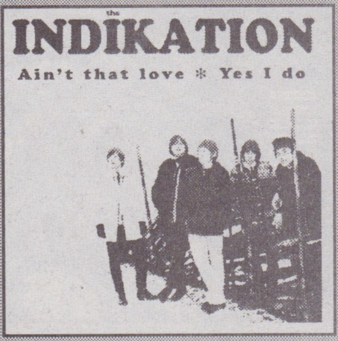
Fuck'n killer hardcore from somewhere in Pennsylvania. No frills, nothing fancy, just 13 songs of "fuck you" that would fit in just fine on the *Let Them Eat Jellybeans* compilation. 80s hardcore from kids who were barely alive in the 80s...fucking give me more! I highly recommend this self released disc, and if IDLE YOUTH stick together, I'm sure that they will only get better. (WN)
(SCUM, 380 Richlandtown Pike, Apt B, Quakertown, PA 18951)

IN DESPAIR/ATTITUDE - split EP

Eastern European hardcore is superbly represented here by these two female-fronted bands from Slovakia. IN DESPAIR sing mostly in English, but the words and corresponding explanations are translated. IN DESPAIR play anarcho-punk not too far removed from CONTRAVENE, whose LP I reviewed earlier in this issue, but with more hardcore than metal influence. Great lyrics, especially "East European HC," which addresses East Europeans ignoring local bands in favor of more "desirable" bands from the West. With bands like IN DESPAIR right in your own back yard, it seems asinine that kids would not support their local scene. ATTITUDE are slightly more melodic, and take a more "fist in the air" punk rock approach, but with plenty of tree-hugging ("every tree and every flower gives you positive power") and personal politics to go along with your mosh pit. Both bands are superb, and a great example of how much we westerners lose when we don't look outside our narrow punk rock confines. I'm not sure about the address, as there are several, so try to email the band to find out where to get this record. (WN)
(Pat'o Durisin, Paricovska 92, 075 01 Trebisov, SLOVAKIA, attitude.band@email.com)

THE INDIKATION - "Ain't That Love/Yes I Do"

WHAT THE FUCK IS THIS SHIT!!!!!! No info at all.....is this an old 60s band or a new 60s band?????........but whatever decade it comes from it SUCKS DICK!!!!......by-the-fucking-numbers!!!.....no style of its own what-so-ever.....if this is an old band I hope you're all six feet under....if this so happens to be a new band, and I think it is, well then....you can suck a fart outta my asshole and blow it into your mother's face..... (SW)
(Screaming Apple, Dustemichstr 14, 50939 Koln, GERMANY, www.screaming-apple-records.de)



INMATES - "Asshole Unanimous Presents..." LP

So there is no mention of who is in the band, where they are from, or a shred of lyrical content, so I am not sure what to tell you. But I can tell you this. The INMATES crank through some serious punk rock. Growling vocals mix well with the fist pumping guitar heavy sound. Bound to cause spontaneous circle circle pits throughout repeated listens (RC)
(Human Stench, 14 McKinley Terr, Pittsfield, MA 01201)

THE INSURGENT - "Tin Cans and Strings" EP

This kind of music makes you feel like a kid again but this time without the sexual frustration. It's like the first time you listened to CRIMPSHRINE and didn't care that the guitar sounded like crap and they couldn't sing. It must be said that the INSURGENT do have a better guitar sound but the production, or lack thereof, really makes this band. The record has reached the perfect point, where it is both highly listenable and still has a feeling of energy that has been lost in so many records. Their sound is even reminiscent of the late, great East Bay band. The songs are catchy and up-beat with all three members contributing on vocals, and one of them has a hint of Jeff Ott in the his voice. This is by no means a ripoff, though. The songs are a bit faster, leaning toward some straight-up hardcore. The structure of the songs also tends to be a bit more complicated. I can't often say this without laughing, but this time I mean it when I recommend this record. (PA)
(Square of Opposition, 2935 Fairview St, Bethlom, PA 18020)

THE (INTERNATIONAL) NOISE CONSPIRACY - "Up for Sale/Written on the Bourgeois Body"

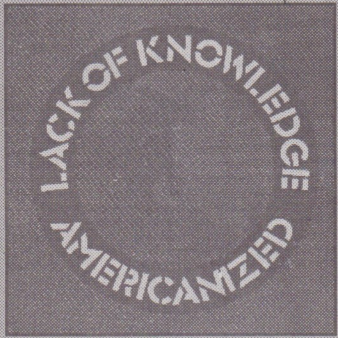
The jury is still out on these Scandinavians. I think they have some great songs, and these two are no exception. However, the more they appear to be playing the mainstream music industry game, the less authentic their situationist politics seem to be. It's hard to tell if they really want to change the world, or if they just want to be the next HIVES. (I like the HIVES too, for what that's worth). Well, if you feel like dancing along while the jury deliberates, check this out, but be warned that one song is already on the album. (AM)
(Sympathy For The Record Industry; www.sympathyrecords.com)

J CHURCH - "Palestine" CD

A collection of demo, acoustic, and quasi-experimental tracks. No, Lance hasn't discovered the joy of weed. He is just breaking open the archives for a projected series of benefit releases. Haven't lost pretty much everything in a recent fire including Honey Bear stuff, equipment, personal belongings, and most tragically from my warped point of view, his record collection, this is a start. Lo fi at best, this is worthwhile for fans of J CHURCH and a good cause. (RL)
(Honey Bear, www.midheaven.com)

J CHURCH/PETROGRAD - split EP

It seems like most of the stuff Lance has put out lately has been "demo" type recordings, and to be honest, I think they benefit from the rawness of the production. Three songs here, one of which is a fairly pointless ZOUNDS cover, but the other two are rockin'. Much more "punk" than you might expect from J CHURCH. PETROGRAD's side contains two above-average melodic punk numbers,



but with a political edge. Great split, would have been perfect without the ZOUNDS song! (AM)
(Christopher's, 34 Rue De Trintage, L-5465 Waldbredimus, LUXEMBOURG, christopher-srecords@internet.lu)

JERRYBUILT - "Upstarts" CD
Melodic intricate punk from England with an emotional flavor. Some of the faster songs are OK, but this is not my cup of tea. (AD)
(Firefly, PO Box 30179, London E17 5FE, UK)

JIMMY WANK - "Lost in the City" CDEP
I didn't think I'd like this, but I'm hooked. It's total indie rock fluf, but oh, so good. Lots of guitar effects, an accent, an organ, and super glossy production. This is not a punk rock CD, but I still dig it. (BM)
(Elp, elprecords@musique.net, www.elp-records.fr.st)

JUMALAN RUOSKA - "Vierema" EP
JUMALAN RUOSKA, from Finland, have a bizzare and interesting approach to punk, combining fast, devastating Finnish hardcore with lounge intros, funky bass lines, and the quirky, silly attitude of bands like the DEAD MILKMEN or BIG BOYS to make up this six-song EP. They pull it off pretty well, keeping their emphasis on the energy and intensity. Interesting... worth a listen. (VH)
(Jyrki Nissinen, Vierematie 10, 74200 Vierema, FINLAND)

KEITZER - "...To Destry the Planet Earth" LP
Without knowing anything about them, you would probably immediately assume this band was from Germany—they've got the post-ACME Per Koro Records SYSTRAL/MORSER grind/metalcore sound down perfectly. Perhaps too perfectly. Normally I love this style, and I adore almost anything out of Germany, but for some reason this band isn't doing for me. They're certainly heavy—there's constant double bass and blasting and enough vocalists to fill their songs with wall-to-wall screaming and growling, but none of the riffs or songs are really standing out to me. This is really well-done ACME-worship, so if you're a fan of this style, you won't be disappointed. You just won't be blown away either. (EL)
(Farewell, Gustav-Freytag-Str.18, 47057 Duisburg, GERMANY, www.plastic-bomb.de, farewell-rec@plastic-bomb.de)

KICKED IN THE HEAD - "Salita" CD
Hooray for NEW FOUND GLORY with rock 'n' roll "riffing" and a singer that sounds like Dexter Holland, plus a few INCUBUS parts. Never have I been more misled by a record cover. Shove your harmonies up your fucking ass. (MX)
(Resurrection A.D., PO Box 763, Red Bank, NJ 07701, www.resurrection-ad.com)

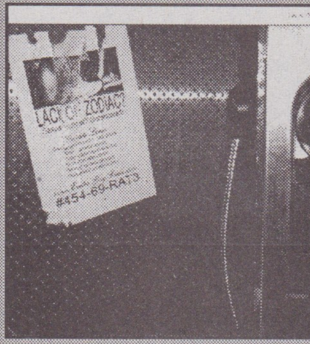
KILLERMETERS - "Metric Noise" 2xLP
Strike up another "W" in the column for Detour Records! Following their recent reissue of the CIGARETTES, Detour gives us the KILLERMETERS, and I for one like. Now I must be honest—while I do like a lot of the mod stuff from the early 80s, I am not overly familiar with a lot of its history. In other words, I don't know who the other big players were outside of the JAM, CHORDS, etc. Good thing there is a band history included. I do know this record makes me dress fashionably, drink spirits, and dance. (JF)
(Detour, PO Box 18, Midhurst, West Sussex, UK GU29 9YU)

LACK OF KNOWLEDGE - "Americanized" CD
LACK OF KNOWLEDGE, from London, were a part of the whole CRASS aesthetic, and even released a 7" on their label (which I don't remember being as good as this stuff). I definitely get a real Crass Records vibe with the dark brooding sound and introspective lyrics. This CD compiles stuff from 1978-2000 (22 years!) but is by no means a complete discography, and you know what? It's *fantastic*. It totally held my interest throughout and flows even with tracks recorded 22 years apart back to back. The band had a real MOB/ZOUNDS-meets-JOY DIVISION sound, but with plenty of spark and energy, especially on the songs recorded in 2000 which sound a lot like THATCHER ON ACID. I can't believe this band isn't well known like many others who passed through the Crass roster! GTA is one of the few labels who unearth and produce consistently good retrospective releases devoid of throwaway tracks and live crap….this CD is no exception. One of the best new/old things I've heard in years. (TB)
(Grand Theft Audio, 501 Glenoaks Blvd, PMB 313, Glendale, CA 91202)

LACK OF ZODIAC - "Sexual Hunger? Uncensored!" EP
LACK OF ZODIAC make for a pretty interesting listen. Parts of their songs are pure chaotic hardcore with screaming, loud guitar, lightning fast drums and lots of odd changes. Other parts have a really fucked up, twangy, rock feel as if they are auditioning for GSL. This is a 7" that is well worth checking out. (PA)
(Norway Rat, Postbox 299, 1702 Sarpsborg, NORWAY, norwayratrecords.com).

LO CAST STYLE - "Nightmare" EP
I must admit that I don't know much about Scandinavian hardcore, so I don't really know how

to place these Finnish dudes within that scene, but holy crap, is this good. They play what is usually referred to as "Jade Tree style" hardcore, but that just means that they're not afraid to go with a melody if they feel the need. It's plenty brutal (more so than most of the bands of this style), with tortured vocals and a few angry social commentaries, but it's also inspiringly positive, and you can tell it's a product of love, either for the scene or for each other. Apparently they have two self-released CD-Rs in addition to this, which will satiate me until a proper full length can be unleashed. (MX)
(A Conspiracy, Hameentie 162 as. 1, 00560 Helsinki, FINLAND, www.locaststyle.cjb.net)



LAUKAUS - "Mika on Tuolla?" EP

LAUKAUS is a Japanese band who play in the classic Finnish style, *and sing in Finnish.* I won't try to explain, because I can't. The good news is that it's classic '83-style Finnish-like punk rock. I particularly enjoyed the flip, which bears down into a high-distortion, high-velocity thrash attack worthy of APPENDIX—especially on the standout, "Tuho Ja Kuolema." Really, quite good. (SS).
(Distort, Box 3400, Wallington, NJ 07057 or Naoki Tanaka, 1-13-22-1204, Tanaka-Chou, Higashinada-ku, Kobe-shi, Hyougo-ken, 658-0081, JAPAN)

MALKOVICH - LP

Though this is a one-sided 12", MALKOVICH has managed to squeeze ten blaring rockers on the A side. Very cost-effective! Anyways, the music: MALKOVICH is another band with the now seemingly characteristic Scandanavian sound. Think JR EWING or KAOSPILOT, but with a more driving, straightforward beat and fewer intricacies. The vocals, too, set MALKOVICH apart in being a bit more aggressive and voice-cracking than the aforementioned bands. The artwork for this 12" is also pretty cool: screened covers with a transparency on top. I'm always a sucker for that stuff. (SP)
(Transit, Haarlemmerstraat 33, 2312DJ Leiden, NETHERLANDS, www.malkovich.tk)

THE MIGHTY GORDONS - "For Bosomaniacs Only" LP

Here we have some German hot rod rock and roll. Now we all know the world is flooded with this kind of music, and these bands are a dime a dozen. These guys have two things working to their advantage though, female backing vocals and a horn section. A lot of bands claim to have the "50s sound" but leave out two of the key ingredients to 50s rock and roll; girls and horns. C'mon, think about all the great 50s songs had either horns or girls. It's true. So good job, guys. This reminds me of ANDY G & THE ROLLER KINGS to an extent, but also brings to mind SMASH UP DERBY and other hot rod combos. Not a bad record. (BM)
(Demolition Derby, PB 4005, 2800 Mechelen 4, Belgium, GERMANY, www.demderby.com)

MIKE V & THE RATS - EP

I never knew pro skater Mike Vallely was a punker...but then again everyone is this days. If you know how this guy skates, you can imagine how this sounds. Brooding, tough, aggressive hardcore with a nod and a wink to the mighty BLACK FLAG. Four tracks. No bullshit. Me like. (TB)
(Indecision, PO Box 6052, Garden Grove, CA 92846)

MORTE ASCETA - CD

Weird, weird Brazilian band. They start off as good but seemingly typical D-beat crusty hardcore. But then all their songs take on weird twists—for instance, the first song reminded me of the discordance of early 90s Virginia band IPECAC meeting DISCHARGE. Just about every song has some cool take on a rock part in place of a breakdown in the middle. Normally I am strongly against "rock" parts in my metal or my hardcore, but they make it work with reckless energy. The lyrics are utterly indecipherable—the singer honestly sounding like a retarded, mumbling two-year-old, but somehow that comes off as a good thing. And now the layout's suggesting a clear BORN AGAINST influence. The guitars are good and thrashy and the songs are all short, go-for-the-throat hardcore, except the last song, stretching to four minutes to incorporate some killer metallic touches. Great straightjacket-wearing hardcore—check this shit out. (EL)
(Vietnamita, CX Postal 194, 80011-970 Curitiba, PR, BRASIL)

MYLES OF DESTRUCTION - "Running Only Makes the Fire Worse" CD

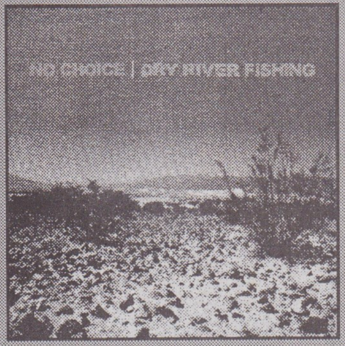
Imagine the DOG-FACED HERMANS meets EXCRUCIATING TERROR. That is what this sounds like. Yes I know that I could have said it sounded like later Slap-A-Ham releases, but those sort of lagged and this is actually halfway decent. A surprising release, especially since MYLES OF DESTRUCTION are from Philadelphia. (JF)
(Myles Of Destruction, PO Box 42673, Philadelphia, PA 19101)

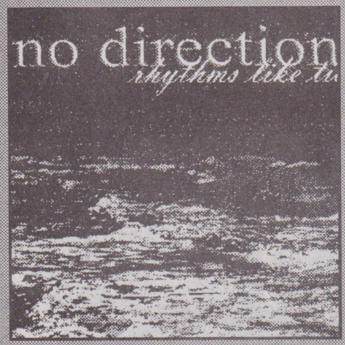
NEVER HEARD OF IT - "Limited Edition" CD

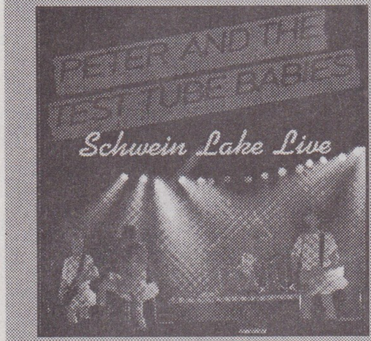
Poppy and energetic punk from West Covina, California. It's maybe a little sugary for me, and a little formulaic overall, but not nothing too unpleasant. (AD)
(NHOI, 2677 S. Citrus St, West Covina, CA 91791)

NEW CHRISTS - "We Got This" 2xLP

I'm wee bit intimidated by this double LP (with its imposing 8,000 gram vinyl—you could develop an repetitive stress injury on this thing). It's the new release of the band fronted by one-time RADIO BIRDMAN frontman Rob Younger, backed my a wild-eyed group of like-mided Aussies. One of those releases you can't dismiss with a simple catchphrase or cliché—it's also the kind of "album" that highfalutin Rock Critics spill ink over and evaluate with extreme caution. I however,







will take the low road and suggest that if you're a fan of BIRDMAN's 1970s classic LP *Radios Appear*, you'll find a lot to like on *This is This*. The pace is slightly slower and more ponderous, but Younger's unmistakable voice and ironic/melancholic lyrics are well in place. See, the energy's there, it's just expressed a little differently. The passage of time and all that. The title track, "Groovy Times," and "First Plane Home" show the band as a powerful, confident outfit irrespective of any celebrity connection. Neat neat. (JH)
(Laughing Outlaw, www.laughingoutlaw.com)

NO CHOICE- "Dry River Fishing" CD
OK, somehow I had never heard this band until I got this CD. I went to their website and found out that NO CHOICE had released a couple of 7" back in '82 and such on Riot Records, but had not released anything else outside of one of those GTA reissue packages that are so cool. Well let me tell you, if their old stuff is anywhere as good as this is, than I am going to be spending a few more dollars this week. Melodic, political, and just played with passion. This is like a cross between ZOUNDS and SNUFF, two bands that I truly love and admire. It is finding things like this, that give me faith in the so called "scene." Fucking brilliant, I say, fucking brilliant. (JF)
(Newest Industry, Unit 160, 61 Wellfield Rd, Cardiff, CF24 3DG, UK)

NO DIRECTION - "Rhythms Like Tides" CD
Super pro hardcore from the Midwest. The words "emotional" and "metal" both fit quite well...NO DIRECTION are a band one might see at Krazy Fest, or playing with SAVES THE DAY. That said, they're really good at it, I find myself enjoying this a bit more than I thought I would when the disc started. But nonetheless, put this one in the "fans of the genre will be stoked," or perhaps "not my cup of tea, but check it out if you like that sort of thing." (WN)
(Boxman, 3473 N. Bremen St, Milwaukee, WI 53212)

NONE OF YOUR FUCKING BUSINESS - "Escapes from Hell" EP
OK, this is probably one of the least user-friendly records I have ever seen. The record was completely sealed in the cover, so you had to tear open the cover to get to it. And then they had the hole in the middle of the record covered up so you had to tear that off just to get the record down on the player. Then one side played backwards and the songs were spaced apart so you had to listen to a bunch of dead air between the two songs. Funny yet annoying, just the way they wanted it. Anyway, this is blazing fast grind with hammering drums, distorted guitar, and growling vocals. Stenchcore? Grindcore? Angercore? Regardless, you get the idea. I have a feeling that this won't be the last we'll be hearing from this three-piece from Los Angeles There is no label on this record, but I think the record may be on... (RC)
(Perplexing)

OHUZARU - "Thrash is Business" 5"
Italian thrashcore from this now defunct (?) five-piece. If you are even remotely intrigued by that brief description, then it is more than worth your while to hunt this down, as the words "thrash" and "core" have rarely been represented as well as they are in these four short songs (including a cover of S.O.D.'s "Milk"). Think TOTAL FURY and FLASH GORDON and LIFES HALT and DEAD NATION and all that shit. Eat it up man, this shit is fucking awesome. (WN)
(Heroine c/o Boris Battiatini, Via Galilei, 6-47020, Montiano (Fc), ITALY)

OS PEDRERO - "Estilo Selvagem Rock 'n' Roll" CD
Punk rock from Brazil that can get a little bit frantic and disjointed at times. Still this is fast, yet melodic and played with spirit. (JF)
(no address)

PETER & THE TEST TUBE BABIES - "Schwein Lake Live" CD
Recorded in '95 with all the hits and some of their later crummy songs. Snotty punk with toilet humor lyrics if you're not familiar. As I've said before I'm a huge fan of their first two LPs and its always great to hear "Student Wankers" and "Banned From The Pubs." Great sound quality and well played but who needs another live TEST TUBE BABIES LP? It ain't *Pissed & Proud,* that's for sure. (TB)
(Captain Oi, PO Box 501, High Wycombe, Bucks, HP10 8QA, UK)

THE PITS - "The Face Of England" CD
I reviewed a single by these guys a few months ago and dug it. Here is a full length (their second at least) that follows in the same catchy street punk fashion. These guys remind me of CHELSEA *The Alternative* era punk as well as new generation street. Very tuneful without the predicable sloganeering. One of the UK's better current bands. (RL)
(Government, thepits8@aol.com)

A PLANET FOR TEXAS - "Sprechen Sie Rock?" CD
A PLANET FOR TEXAS deliver a strong dose of melodic hardcore full of tasty guitar licks and single string leads. They opt for the melodic vocals with harmonizing backups which in some tunes is an almost 60s pop delivery. I'd say they aren't far from SNUFF or an ambidextrous WIZO. (HM)
(Diaphragm, PO Box 10388, Columbus, OH 43201, www.aplanetfortexas.com, www.cringe.com/diaphragm)

PREACHERS - "Moanin'" LP

The PREACHERS: a band who wore regulation Prince Valiant 1960s shag 'dos matched with clerical collars ("the PREACHERS, gettit?"). These guys were a SoCal outfit that made the rounds during the heady years of the mid 1960s and put out a couple of passable garage-pop singles (the best being their wild take on BO DIDDLEY's "Who Do You Love"), all collected here. OK for the white-guys-playing-R&B style of the time, though it's by no means soul-shattering. Right here if you want it. (JH)
(Dionysus, PO Box 1975, Burbank, CA, www.dionysusrecords.com

PROJECT GRIZZLY - "Ebay Apocalypse" EP

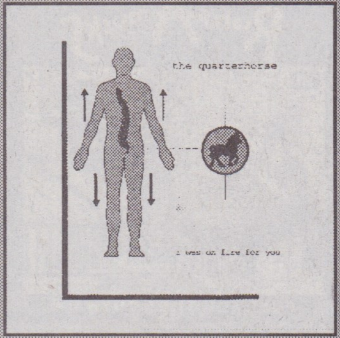
Pretty forgettable power violence from Buffalo. The blast beats are fairly solid, the sound on this one-side 7" is appropriately raw, there's a heavy nod to SF Bay Area bands like SPAZZ, NO LESS, and PLUTOCRACY, and it's fast noisy and relatively energetic, but there's still nothing much unique or memorable here to ever make me think of playing this again. (EL)
(Perplexing, PO Box 143, Buffalo, NY 14215)

THE PROMISE - "Believer" CD

13 tracks of well-executed, heavy, modern straight-edge hardcore. I believe this band is from Syracuse, NY, which in its heyday was the mecca for horrible straight-edge metal. The PROMISE really isn't all that bad. Every now and again, I think it's going to speed up, but it pretty much remains at a mid-paced tempo (for hardcore standards anyway). And then the double bass pedals and squealing guitars kick in. Sigh. Way back in 1996, a band by the name of RAIN ON THE PARADE wrote a song called "Body Bag" addressing what was at the time the worst period of straight-edge hardcore. The lyrics went something like this: "Hardcore and metal will never gel/So we're sending your sound back to fucking hell!"). That about sums it up. (CC)
(Indecision, PO Box 6052, Garden Grove, CA 92846)

THE PULSES - LP

Some of these songs have pulsing bass and a skronky guitar sound that reminds me at different times of the BIG BOYS' less funky stuff or the JAM. Some others are somewhat garage-y stompers. The rest of the songs are pretty straightforward indie rock. The noisier, punk-sounding songs are great, the others are so-so. I suspect I was assigned this record for review on the strength of the first song, which could be straight off the *Wreck Collection* re-release reviewed elsewhere. After that great opener, the rest of the album is a bit of a let-down, but it's still pretty good nonetheless. (AM)
(Dirtnap, PO Box 21249, Seattle, WA 98111, www.dirtnaprecs.com)



THE QUARTERHORSE - "I Was on Fire for You" CD

LAUGHING HYENAS. The same screamed vocals over sludgey bass lines, the same love for repetition, the same nod-along excitement. It's updated a little for current trends, in that the lyrics aren't as mopey and depressive, but it's HYENAS time all right. The vote is yours. (RW)
(Radio Is Down, PMB 1436, 120 State St.NE, Olympia,WA)

R.O.M. - "Why Don't You Shut Up and Have Fun" CD

OK, recently I have noticed a tendency here in the pages of *MRR* to blast Japanese hardcore bands for adding a little rock into their sound. Well this is one reviewer who says bring it on. I personally like my hardcore with a dash of the rock 'n' roll swagger a la SMASH YOUR FACE. If you haven't guessed by now, R.O.M. play Japanese hardcore *with* a rock'n' roll edge. It is good, it is hard, and it rocks. (JF)
(Octpasscut)

R.O.M./R.I.P. - "Power Gun Etiquette: R.O.M. vs R.I.P." split CD

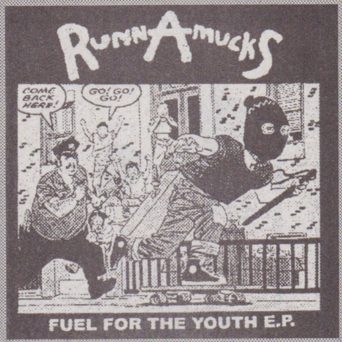
REVENGE OF MONGOLOID and RESOLUTE IMMORTAL PARTIZAN both have great names hidden behind your typical punk any-three-initial moniker and are both from Japan and, coincidentally enough, share a CD together where each plays three songs apiece. Beyond that, R.O.M. like their bad metal (replete with wanky solos) just a bit more than they like their hard punk, they also "sing" a bit too much for me. R.I.P. have a bit more of a street punk style to their hard punk and add way too many sing-along parts for my enjoyment. Pass. (WM)
(Octpasscut)

RABID GRANNIES - "Inte Ditt Problem" EP

Don't be fooled by the name (a Troma movie reference, I believe). These six songs by Sweden's RABID GRANNIES are capable of inducing a circle pit frenzy, regardless of wheelchair accessibility. The A side, or "Swedish side," of the record delivers three songs of mid-paced hardcore, sung in their native tounge, sticking somewhat to Swedish roots. While the "international" side speeds things up, playing more straightforward, American-influenced thrashy hardcore. (VH)
(CMF, c/o Sivervik, Kvarnv.I5A, 90320 Umeå, SWEDEN, www.rabidgrannies.cjb.net)

RACAK/AK-47 - split EP

RACAK, who are from Germany, blast though some bitter mid-tempo crustcore. Their sound is well-produced and very thick and heavy. AK-47 mix together a variety of styles, blending hardcore with crust. They come across faster and thrashier than AK-47, but I liked both sides equally. Check this one out and support international hardcore. (RC)
(Schandmaul, PF 610 617, 10937 Berlin, GERMANY; schandmaul@so36.net)



DEE DEE RAMONE/TERROR GRUPPE - "split" CD

Two songs by Dee Dee and two songs by that other band. Nothing worth writing home about. Everyone's just trying to make a buck off the man. (BM)
(Wanker, PO Box 2005 87, D-35018 Marburg, GERMANY, www.wanker-records.de)

REDBANK - "Machines Disregard My Pronoun" CD

This CD is annoyingly quiet (the recording, not the actual songs) and annoyingly slow, and it totally ruins any enjoyment I could potentially derive from listening to it. It's really too bad, because there's actually some really complex, layered emo-pop going on here that injects some needed intricacy into a genre that tends to get boring fast. Speed up the songs, and get a crisper recording, and you'll have something. (MX)
(Keith, www.keithrecords.net)

THE RIOTEARS - "Radioactive Rapsodies" CD

The RIOTEARS crank out some rockin' punk with a prominent organ. Their superior songwriting skills create intense compositions surging with dynamic energy. Imagine Danzig fronting the bastard child of the MURDER CITY DEVILS and the PHANTOM LIMBS. Excellent. (HM)
(Trash2001, PO Box 10 16 53, Bottrop, GERMANY, www.trash2001.de)

RIPP WINKLER - "Pork and Loating in Osh Vegas" CD

I gotta say I haven't liked much ska/punk in years, but RIPP WINKLER's street punk style ska is rockin'. For one, they don't insist on playing ska on every song, and they omit a lot of the the generic up-beat guitar strokes. The eleven tunes are separated with goofy sound bytes including a couple classic moments from the fabulous film *Shakes the Clown.* (HM)
(www.rippwinkler.com)

RUNNAMUCKS - "Fuel for the Youth" EP

Assuming that this band is generic thrash makes an ass out of you and...well, you. Awesome fucking snotty hardcore that sounds like it could of come out of Boston in 1983. All right! There is nothing like being kicked in the head outta nowhere (nowhere being Casselberry, FL). From the first track about friends who are full of shit to the last track about spending time in jail, everything about this record rules . JERRY'S KIDS, anyone? (CC)
(Acrude, BP 53, 75721 Paris, Cedex 15, FRANCE)

SALOON FIGHTERS - "A Night at the Saloon" EP

Fuckin' A! This is one raw-ass motherfucker! This is metal-tinged punk circa 1992 from the Tornio region in the north of Finland, home of TERVEET KADET. In fact, Piasky is the bass player from TERVEET KADET, and the record is put out on the label run by La'ja, the vocalist from TERVEET KADET. The A side is fucking unrepentant MOTORHEAD-type brutality and grabs you by the throat immediately. The heavy interplay between bass and guitar will make the hair stand up on the back of your neck. The superior growl of the Lemmy-esque vocals make for a hard-rocking experience. You get good choruses from the band and the electric guitarist flails away on his axe. Excellent! The B side is not quite as powerful. It could be compared to later era ROSE TATTOO. Turn the record back over. The A side, "Saloon Fighters Are Here," is absolutely brilliant metal/punk. Yeah! (BR)
(Jesperi, c/o Pekka Laurikkala, Takajarventie 30 H 52, Fin-94700, Kemi, FINLAND, pekkalaurikkala@luukku.com)

SAUCERS - "What We Did" CD

I don't know about this late 70s band Connecticut band. A little art, a little power pop and a little punk. I know they have a couple pseudo collectible 45s, which are included on this collection. Maybe I'm just not getting the vibe right now. A few decent tracks out of twenty plus at best. (RL)
(Grand Theft Audio, 501 West Glenoaks Blvd, PMB 313, Glendale, CA 91202)

SEVEN FEET FOUR/THE FLYING WORKER - split EP

Now this how a split EP should be done. Two bands that sound pretty different existing on the same piece of wax, juxtaposed in a way that surely complements each other's respective styles. I threw on the SEVEN FEET FOUR side first and was stoked to hear a brand of quirky, dissonant rock tunes that resembles the MONORCHID and SKULL CONTROL (with a slightly less annoying vocalist than Chris Thompson) a bit more than it does the BLOOD BROTHERS and all those other pretentious tight-t-shirt motherfuckers around these days. In other words, while I despise all that crap that has flooded the scene lately, I really like SEVEN FEET FOUR. Top notch stuff. On the flipside, the FLYING WORKER goes the "screamo" route with a sound not unlike many late-90s bands of the genre (JEROMES DREAM, etc.) Its done very well, with well-timed hooks and great production, but I must admit that it it doesn't quite grab my attention as much as the SEVEN FEET FOUR side did. To say the very least, this an excellent split and I would highly recommend seeking this out. (SP)
(Puzzle, c/o Hugues Le Corre, 4 Cite d' Aletu, 35000 Rennes, FRANCE, puzzlerecords@wauadoo.fr)

SILVER TONGUED DEVIL - "Motorcycle Boy" EP

Rock 'n' roll motorcycle boy? Alright, why not. This music reminds me of the "Black Widows" motorcycle gang in the Clint Eastwood movie *Every Which Way But Loose*—sounds and looks like tough guy rock music, but the lyrics and vocals are kind of toungue-in-cheek silly. I think El Duce of the MENTORS would be proud. The fold-out even has a picture of a bearded motorcycle

slob, complete with SS helmet, chugging a bottle of whiskey. Three sleazy hard rock songs on this 45 (extra points for one of them being "Kick Out The Jams" by MC5). I think you already know if you dig this. (AS)
(Überalles, www.uberalles.de)

SILVER TONGUED DEVIL - "We Are the Road Crew" EP
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania's SILVER TONGUED DEVIL have come to rock your little world (again)! These Keystone State punk veterans have gone and put out a scorching single covering one MOTORHEAD song and one AC/DC song. Now that shows good taste! SILVER TONGUED DEVIL chose the song "We Are the Road Crew" by Lemmy and Co., and this has big balls! Quite rocking! Turn the single over and you get a rough-neck version of Mr. Angus Young's "Have a Drink on Me," Iron City punk style! This here is a real good rock n' roll record by a band that knows *how to rock*. Get your copy now! (BR)
(Rat, c/o Rob Tabachka, 10 Victory Lane, Leetsdale, PA 15056, www.silvertongueddevil.com, rockinrorst@hotmail.com)

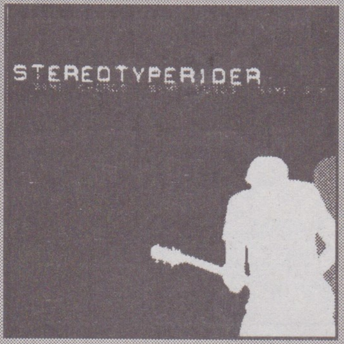
SLAPSHOT - "Greatest Hits, Slashes and Crosschecks" CD
22 of your favorite SLAPSHOT songs re-recorded for the new millenium. This even includes the straight-edge classic "In Your Face," which doesn't make much sense since Choke broke edge more than ten years ago. These aren't necessarily worse than the originals, but they sure as hell are a lot more produced. I was pleasantly surprised by some of their newer material (newer meaning anything past the *Step On It* LP released in 1988), and I suppose this would be the only good reason to pick this up. The enhanced live Quicktime footage of a recent SLAPSHOT show didn't do much for me. Personally, I would hunt down the SLAPSHOT CD that contains *Back on the Map* and *Step On It* for a better introduction to this classic Boston hardcore band. (CC)
(Bridge 9, PO Box 990052, Boston, MA 02199-0052)

SLOPPY SECONDS - "Destroyed" CD
I didn't realize this snotty pop punk classic was out of print. Lump this in with the QUEERS and SCHREECHING WEASEL early LPs in quality. "Traci Come Back," "I Don't Wanna Be A Homosexual," and "Leavin' On A Jet Plane," to name just a few tracks. Four bonus tracks included too. A no-brainer if you don't have this 1989 release. (RL)
(Coldfront, www.coldfrontrecords.com)

SONG OF ZARATHUSTRA - "A View from High Tides" LP
I could just be imagining this as I recently saw JR EWING, but it seems that these guys attempt a similar style of danceable emo-hardcore. They're more restrained (which sometimes translates to "more boring" or "less interesting"), but they still manage to sneak some good songs in there. I don't really know how else to put it, except that they sound like I would expect a band who has had releases on Hand Held Heart, Sound Virus, or Troubleman to sound. I give them credit for doing the first PIXIES cover I've ever heard that actually does the original song justice (they do "Tame," in case you were wondering). (MX)
(Troubleman, 16 Willow St, Bayonne, NJ 07002)

SOVIETTES/VALENTINES - split LP
OK, kids, if a 12" piece of vinyl is played on 33 rpm and has 11 songs, it is an LP, not an EP. I am mentioning this because the front of this fine slab of vinyl says EP. Now onto the music. The SOVIETTES play poppy punk rock that for some reason brings to mind C/Z records, mixed with a little FASTBACKS, and a dash of the whole mid 90s Midwestern pop punk sound. Good basic stuff complete with multiple lead female vocals, though one can definitely sing better than the other. The VALENTINES on the other hand could probably go out and do a record tomorrow on Mutant Pop and fit right in. Poppy punk that is played well. The lyrics in this band are definitely written by that person who probably gives you a diatribe about how they aren't into politics, every time you bring up the slightest notion of anything remotely political. Another solid release from perhaps the most punk rockin' city west of the Sierras. (JF)
(Pop Narcotic, PO Box 14985, Minneapolis, MN 55414)

THE STAKEOUT/BURNPILE - split LP
The assigning elves have been really good to me this month. The STAKEOUT rip it up Finnish style with eight raging tracks of hardcore/punk. These guys would have no problem picking up where DS-13 and E.T.A. left off. The STAKEOUT are *so* smoking, that I am curious as to why Six Weeks paired them up with a shitty band like BURNPILE. Seriously, I feel sorry for the STAKEOUT, especially since it looks like BURNPILE was in charge of both sides of the record sleeve. Don't let the shitty artwork keep you away—the STAKEOUT's side of this record owns you like BURNPILE's bassist owns all the MR BUNGLE records. (CC)
(Six Weeks, 225 Lincoln Ave, Cotati, CA 94931)



STEREOTYPERIDER - "Same Chords, Same Songs, Same Six Strings" CD
Emotional melodic poppy hardcore—but it's weird, I'm experiencing no nauseous symptoms. In fact this is pretty good, unlike most of the stuff like this STEREOTYPERIDER actually rock. It has enough hooks and energy, and *balls* to lift it above the field. Not bad at all. (AD)
(Suburban Home, PO Box 40757, Denver, CO 80204)

STINKPIPE - "Y" EP

I didn't know what to expect from this record—with a name like STINKPIPE and song titles like "Punker Joe" and "Chicken Farmer," but I was soon pleasantly surprised. The first song sounds completely like one of BORN AGAINST's head-bangers—in fact, this song is fucking *killer*! When I flipped the record over, I had to double check to make sure that this wasn't a *split* EP! Here, STINKPIPE adopts a sort of poppy sound that reminded me for a second of *Dear You* -era JAWBREAKER, or even HUM but then dives right back into their mid-tempo attack. This sudden shift shocked me at first, but actually works quite well. Definitely one of the more interesting and unique records I've reviewed recently, with a pinch of all sorts of powerfull ingredients included. (SP)
(Stinkpipe, PO Box 116, Pembroke, MA 02359, www.oppositerecords.com)

STITCHES - "Automatic" EP

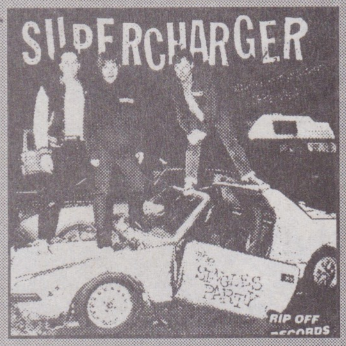
Here's my thing: The STITCHES rock like nobody's fucking business. That's my "thing" before I ever listen to this disc. Director Mike says the STITCHES are always just a tad too slow for him. (For the record, Director Mike says that about a lot of records. I think Director Mike likes his speed, if you know what I mean.) This one is a tinsy bit slower than your average STITCHES record, and could use a dash of speed. Still the snotty vocals and the catchy chords will always keep me coming back. This is one of the truly great punk rock bands, in my opinion. Incidentally, this was also released (minus one track) on the STITCHES own label, Vinyl Dog. It's all about the creepers and the beer. (KK)
(TKO, 3126 W. Cary St. #303, Richmond, CA 23221)

STOCKYARD STOICS - CD

This CD is a year or two old and I have a feeling this band has already split. Pity, 'cos they are rockin'. GC5 meets RANCID with an anarchist slant. Totally catchy and sing-along with smart lefty lyrics…this is what punk is all about. Great stuff indeed. (TB)
(RRRR, 805 Broadway #1, Brooklyn, NY 11206, rebel_records@hotmail.com)

SUBINCISION - "Subincision" CD

This is a reissue of their first full-length LP/CD originally released in 1996. It flaunts their younger, rawer, unabashed energy/sound and features their hits "Anti-Bark Device," "Kerouac," and "12 Pack Girlfriend." This stuff makes a lot more sense at a their infamous crazy shows. (HM)
(Substandard, PO Box 310, Berkeley, CA 94701, www.substandard.com)



SUBINCISION - "Jingo" CD

You know, I've seen SUBINCISION at least three times, and this sounds nothing like I remember. I mean, there's still the poorly recorded, simple-as-fuck pop punk, but they seem to be trying to "diversify" with new wave keyboards and parts that sound like the soundtrack to some old horror movie. Let's just say I discovered a plethora of new ways to cringe while listening to this record. All of this comes inside a package with a militaristic, pro-America motif, which I really hope is ironic (though with the lines "you stupid Berkeley hippies with your anti-war crap, look at what we've done...the people of Afghanistan are happy and they're finally having fun," it's hard as fuck to tell). Shoot me. (MX)
(Substandard, PO Box 310, Berkeley, CA 94701, www.substandard.com)

SUPERCHARGER - "Singles Compilation 1992-1993" LP

Here's all the SUPERCHARGER singles conveniently reissued on one LP, so all you morons can quit trying to track 'em down on eBay. SUPERCHARGER, featuring Rip Off Records executive Greg Lowry, were here and gone in the blink of an eye, leaving us in the dust with this pile of records after they kicked our asses with their sloppy garage assault. All Hail SUPERCHARGER!! (DP)
(Rip Off)

SURE!CONFLICT! - "Blind EP" CD

On the surface, this isn't really too unique. For the most part, it's mid-tempo melodic punk with a few parts that remind me of lower-fi, rock and roll-influenced bands, and a few slower songs with some jangly REM guitar business. You hum along complacently, and you expect the songs to all be about heartbreak or something. Then you read the lyric sheet and realize that there's really only one love song, and the others are about feeling lost in such a technologically advanced world. And, wonder of wonders, the epic ballad that closes out the record is about vegetarianism! A nice range of styles and topics from a promising band. (MX)
(Dark, kloosterstraat 46, 8603 XJ Sneek, NETHERLANDS, www.darkincorporated.com)

THE TAKE - "Propeller" CD

Splendid. Finally, a band that is melodic as hell but also dissonant as hell. Take one of those JIMMY EAT WORLD type of bands, and add in a reluctance to let the melody resolve itself predictable, and sprinkle over it some good lyrics and a healthy dose of alternative rock circa 1995, and you'll have something pretty close to the TAKE. My one complaint is that I think they could have taken it a step further. There are still too many major-label moments; if they could cut those out, I would wholeheartedly endorse them. (MX)
(Household Name, PO Box 12286, London, SW9 6FE, UK, www. householdnamerecords.co.uk)

THEE MICHELLE GUN ELEPHANT - "Rodeo Tandem Beat Specter" CD

There are few bands (that I can think of, anyway) who can whip up the cascade of mud that Japan's THEE MICHELLE GUN ELEPHANT can. It's to their credit that, while they got the requisite hipness in place, they don't hang too tightly on to any particular genre, style, sound, or pigeonhole. It's got a sorta limber late-60s biker soundtrack feel in places, but the whole mess is blown to hell in a haze of feedback that suggests anything but nostalgia. It's a wild and wooly affair that brings a couple of diff styles and bands to mind—like the untouchable HALO OF FLIES at their early best, or the kind of mean-minded noise that critics used to lavish praise on back in the late Reagan era. Slowed down to half speed, with lyrics in Japanese. Played by weirdo cyborgs in wraparound sunglasses and matching silk ties. Lyrically, the ELEPHANT are charting unknown territory: subject matter includes "The Loneliness of the Citröen," "Beat Specter Garcia," and "God Jazz Time." A nice thrill. (JH)

(Alive, PO Box 7112, Burbank, CA 91510)

THEGAVINWIHELMMILLERQUARTET - CD

Absolutely manic tech-metal grindcore. This disc escapes being generic, although I can't quite put my finger on how. The long soundscape noise pieces between 1000 mph grindcore have something to do with it certainly, as well as the inhuman vocals that sound more often like a howling monkey than a metal dude from New York. But mostly I think that THEGAVINWIHELMMILLERQUARTET are just better than 90% of the crap that tough guy Guitar Center twerps try to pass off as the new breed of metal. All over the fucking map; you'd be hard-pressed to find more than a couple of riffs anywhere on this disc, it's just non-stop insanity, and executed to perfection. I get the impression that this is a project band, shame, cause it's far better than most of the "real" grind bands out there. (WN)

(Impatience or Indifference, 3201 3rd St. 2nd Floor, San Francisco, CA 94124)

TODIEFOR - "Virusinfectioncontrol" CD

Everything about this Italian band screams generic copycat—in this case, within the current tech/chaotic hardcore scene. From the all-one-word spelling of their name to the stupid-masquerading-as-witty song title non-sequiturs ("You Won't Save the Town This Time, Michael Caine"), to the glossy layout design, to, most importantly, the note-for-note pilfered BOTCH/COALESCE/DILLINGER ESCAPE PLAN tunes—it's bands like this that make people cynical about trends in music, and hardcore in particular. (EL)

(Heroine, PO Box 35, Cesena, 47023, ITALY, www.heroinerecords.com)

TOTAL FURY - "Committed to the Core" EP

This is the no-brainer of the month. TOTAL FURY, from Japan, fucking tear the house down with their insane brand of thrash. These guys stand head and shoulders above the sea of thrash bands around today. They fucking tear it up with song after song of ballistic speed, catchy breaks, and wicked distortion. All I want to do when I listen to this is break the furniture in the room. And that, my friend, is the sign of a good record. By the way, this is the same record as the one on Youth Attack, except it has an extra track. (RC)

(Busted Heads, Box 275, 901 06 Umeå, SWEDEN, www.ds13.com)

TOWER BLOCKS - "Praise Your Ghetto" CD

Anthemic oi street punk from Germany. The TOWER BLOCKS have released a CD here that is solid, but doesn't do anything to separate it from the rest of the crowd. (JF)

(Knock Out, Postfach 110716, 46527 Dinslaken, GERMANY)

TOY DOLLS - "Orcastrated" CD

A re-issue of a 1995 release. More wacky Olga songs with his awesome guitar playing. A little more guitar wanking than usual, but that's part of the fun here. A great UK band that keeps the fun spirit alive to this day. (RL)

(Captain Oi)

THE TOYS - "Still Dancing" LP

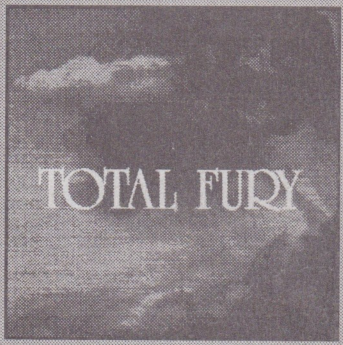
.......total motherfucking boot of some late 70s early 80s power-pop "lite"......so-so, I can dig it at times.....Alex Chilton, Eric Carmen....I think of those dudes as I listen to this.....way limp....shit........!! Wait-a-minute.....this shit is getting real bad!!!!! I don't think even 20/20 would stoop this low.....we're getting into VIOLENT FEMMES now.....hold on, I think I'm playing side two instead of side one.....I AM!!! .....well, side one is much better.....not so much mellow-power-pop here......more like jerky english-style '77 punk-ROCK!!! Oh god, now it's getting bad again......you know what? FUCK THIS RECORD!!!! If you see it in your local bins "bend it"!!!!! It's got an all white cover with a green teddy-bear stamped in the middle....... (SW)

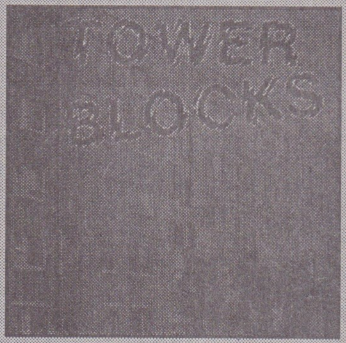
(no address)

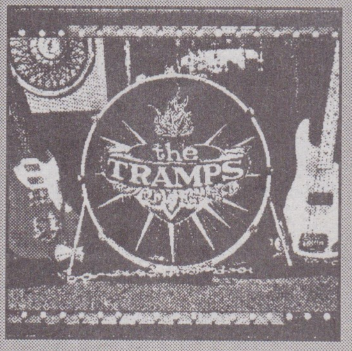
THE TRAMPS - "Backseat Baby" CD

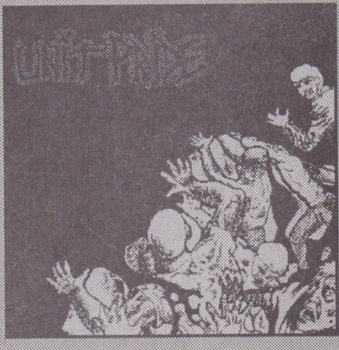
The TRAMPS play basic, medium paced rock and roll which rocks pretty damn hard and sounds dead on like KILLSWITCH, which makes sense because this band contains 1/2 of KILLSWITCH. The singer provides strong female vocals with plenty of "attitude." Sounds like what I would call "garage-y," but in a powerful way. The lyrics are all over the place, which is nice and refreshing. Bonus points for singing about San Francisco. I can imagine those who are at least three years older than me rocking out to this in the various bars of my fair town. Features a member of the WORKIN' STIFFS, as well, if you're interested. (WR)

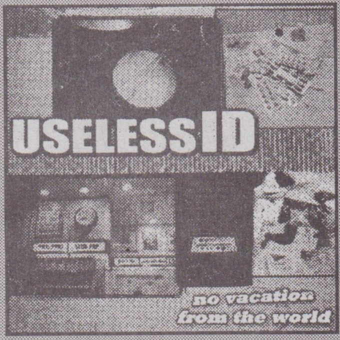
(Broken, PO Box 460402, San Francisco, CA 94141 www.brokenrekids.com)

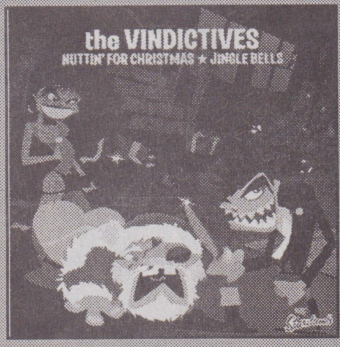












TRI-COUNTY THUNDERCATS - "Japan Tour" EP

One sided-screened tour 7" by a band that put out a great trebly garage single last month. A tour of Japan already? Two songs of their "patented" INHALANTS-style garage-pop with barely-in-tune guitars and loads of charm. Charming! (RW)
(no address)

TWINKEYZ - "Cartoon Land" LP

Faithful reissue of this scarce spaced-out new wave LP by Sacramento's favorite sons. The original issue was on the Dutch Plurex label, and this edition features new artwork by the band's principal songwriter Donny Jupiter. Jeez, new wave is too general; these guys were playing an updated psych sound for the punk era. Highly recommended for people who need a VELVETS influence in their punk versus, I dunno, GBH. (RW)
(Anopholes, PO Box 170045, San Francisco, CA 94117)

UNIT PRIDE - "Then and Now" CD

I can't tell you how stoked I was to find this in my review bin this month. There are people who have been waiting literally over two years for this CD to finally see the light of day, and I am one of them. This is the official UNIT PRIDE discography containing the *Then and Now* 7", the hard to get *Holding On Strong* demo, and a STRAIGHT AHEAD cover (all recorded in 1988). Some might disagree, but I think the demo material was their best stuff. Eric Ozenne's voice sounds younger and less like Ray Cappo, and the bass playing is completely over the top; all which adds to the sense of urgency not found on their only 7" recorded six months later. And you know, the lyrics to the demo version of "Wide Awake" are so much better than the 7" version! This band might have borrowed heavily from YOUTH OF TODAY, and some of the members might not have been straight-edge for that long, but any way you slice it, classic Bay Area straight-edge hardcore starts right fucking here. Recognize. (CC)
(Mankind, PO Box 265 Bellflower, CA 90707)

USELESS ID - "No Vacation From the World" CD

Israeli skate punk, Warped Tour participants, bought a moog and hired someone to play cello... this is just too hip and cool for me. Fuck this, I'm going to get a snack... (BM)
(Kung-Fu, PO Box 38009 Hollywood, CA 90038)

VINDICTIVES - "Nuttin' for Christmas/Jingle Bells"

Love him or hate him, the world of punk rock would be a worse place without Joey Vindictive. Actually, right now there is a dire lack of weirdo eccentric personalities in the scene—it's getting desperately bland, in fact. Where is the next generation of Mykel Boards, Frank Discussions, Doc Darts, Rev. Norbs, etc. etc.? These seasoned wingnut veterans are what makes it all interesting, we *need* them! I love the VINDICTIVES; their brand of snot-filled manic pop punk, like a dorkier SCREECHING WEASEL, or a psychotic SLOPPY SECONDS, has always done it for me. Joey's view of the world is both tragic and hilarious, a true round peg that doesn't fit into the square hole that is society. So it is that even a Christmas novelty record can make me smile as opposed to bringing up my lunch. Funny stuff... now, please bring out a proper record again. (AD)
(Stardumb, PO Box 21145, 3001 AC Rotterdam, NETHERLANDS)

VISITOR 42 - "Monkeys Throw Shit" CD

Stupid title. Chunky, kinda slickly produced, by-the-numbers riff-punk. Some late 70s effects, some modern street punk rips, FEAR, REDUCERS covers. Just kinda average. (RW)
(Butt Flower, PO Box 11534, Oakland, CA 94611)

VODKA JUNIORS - "... All Them Clowns" CD

I think that this is the first band from Greece I've ever heard. Melodic punk that's definitely not grating to my ears as the music is of caliber—solid, fast, hard—it's the vocals I disagree with: sung in that melodic fashion and, furthermore, sung in English. I would've much rather heard them sing in their mother tongue of Greek. Eight songs in eighteen minutes. Comes with a comic book that serves as the lyric sheet. (WM)
(Cannonball 666, PO Box 52817, N. Erithrea, 14671 Athens, GREECE, www.cballrec.com)

WHEELS - "Year of the Horse" EP

Two songs of emo rock 'n' roll. Some of the riffs definitely have an 80s, crotch-stuffing feel to them while at other times the dissonant guitar sound brings to mind some of the more rock influenced emo bands of the 90s. Calling it a mix between AC/DC and DRIVE LIKE JEHU may be a bit presumptuous, though. At times there is a bit of a pop element to the songs as well. The biggest problem with the record is that the lead guitar parts stand out too much in the mix. Other than that, there isn't much wrong with the record, but it hardly stands out. (PA)
(Firehands, 245 Ben Jonson House, Barbican, London, EC2, UK, www.gowheelsgo.com)

THE WOGGLES - "When the Sun Goes Down/I Used to Be a Lover, But Now I'm a Fighter"

One of those 60s punk-influenced deals that seem to still be hanging on. (With a name like the WOGGLES, it was easy enough to see that coming.) This is decent enough stuff, it really is. It's catchy and it seems to capture the 60s rockin' spirit. Still, when I hear this sort of stuff, it just strikes me as kind of boring and ho-hum. Why not just be a 60s cover band and play weddings? With the

amount of this stuff that is out there, I must be in the minority with my opinion. Anyway, as I said, if the 60s stuff is your deal, you should enjoy this one. (KK)
(Nicotine, Via Viola 96, 15057 Tortona (AL), ITALY)

XPOZEZ - "Back on the Streets" CD

Well done, Grand Theft Audio! I never thought I'd hear these songs ever again. As I said when I reviewed the EP that came out a while back, I used to have a XPOZEZ cassette with all these songs on it about ...oh, 16 of 17 years ago, back when half of you were still swimming around in your Dad's balls. Now, thanks to the investigative snooping of Brian GTA, these songs are immortalized on compact disc. Now songs once thought to be consigned to the dust-bin of history, songs like "Seditionaries," "Deformation Dancing," Democrazy" and "1,000 Marching Feet" are available again. From Huddersfield (or 'uddersfield) in the North of England (incidentally, Huddersfield was where the SEX PISTOLS played their last ever show in Britain) in the early-to-mid 80s, XPOZEZ played great tuneful punk rock with good political lyrics, in itself quite unique in those days when everyone wanted to be either the EXPLOITED or CONFLICT. They released a couple of EPs in 1984 and then I assume they just went off to obscure punk band heaven. The singer later went on to be in the much lauded INSTIGATORS who played a similar style sped up. The band never got particularly popular when they were around, nor inspirational since, but they were classic nonetheless and I guess they stuck in a few people's minds because here I am in 2002 reviewing a XPOZEZ CD. Great job! (AD)
(Grand Theft Audio, 501 West Glenoaks Blvd, PMB 313, Glendale, CA 91202)

ZANN/FUNERAL DINER - split EP

The FUNERAL DINER side of this shit is very, very interesting. Almost super fast LOCUST-like music without the keyboards. This is pit ready thrash then keeps funky—break-downing into the Mary Tyler Moore show theme. Except written by punks into later HÜSKER DÜ. Get it? ZANN. Ah, what about ZANN? Feedback fuckin' chug-chug screaming bass-hell spiraling down the pit of punk rock deism. If you like you some punk rock, buy this 7", it good. (JA)
(www.vendettamob.com)

ZANN/FUNERAL DINER - split EP

Oh FUNERAL DINER, why do you waste our time with your annoying drawn-out wimpy INDIAN SUMMER wannabe garbage? Pretentious artsy gobbledygook for art school nerds. Gross. ZANN *is* a delicious treat in the style of later RORSCHACH meets the likes of URANUS, but FUNERAL DINER is a waste of time and space. (MT)
(www.vendettamob.com)

V/A - "Addicted To Oi!" CD

The latest oi comp with the likes of COCKNEY REJECTS, THE CRACK, SLAUGHTER AND THE DOGS, FOREIGN LEGION, and THE BUSINESS to name a few. Some released, some unreleased. I'm a bit burned out on comps but this does have an impressive line-up. (RL)
(Captain Oi)

V/A - "BCT Presents: First Strike 1983 US Hardcore" CD

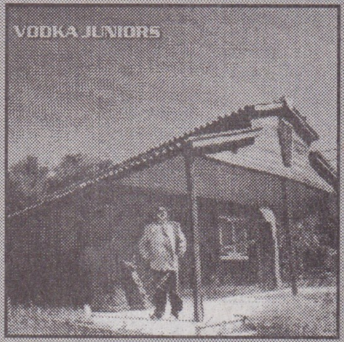
The fourth in this 100% crucial series of BCT Tapes reissues. This disc is perhaps the best yet, compiling 50 songs from bands you have never heard of (except the ACCUSED...and VATICAN COMMANDOS for the truly knowledgeable). Check this out: CLITBOYS, FUTURE RUINS, VIOLATION, SKOUNDRELS, MR. EPP, POISON CENTER, EAT THE RICH, and CULTURAL BREAKTHROUGH are all represented here, and there's not a single track that doesn't smoke. I could ramble for pages, but suffice to say that these reissues are a truly essential piece of punk rock history, one that was almost forgotten, but is thankfully being revived. (WN)
(Enterruption, PO Box 884626, San Francisco, CA 94188-4626)

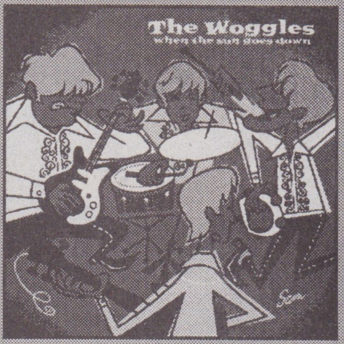
V/A - "Berlin Punk Rock, 1977-1989—Berlin Frisbee, #02" EP

This appealing EP contains eight tunes in varying vintages and styles, nearly all previosly released. Among the more notable: IXTOC-1, who deliver in the classic buzzsaw German style at high velocity; ZERSTORTE JUGEND, whose classic "Kaiser Wilhelm" (released in '84) stays mostly to an intense three-chord chord power-riff; an extremely rare track from TEMPO's 1979 10", whose "Waiting for the Eighties" has a light, hook-laden style not unlike many UK releases from the same year; and a blistering 1986 thrasher from SQUANDERED MESSAGE. Limited to 1000 copies. (SS)
(Weird System, Alstertweite 32, 20099 Hamburg, GERMANY)

V/A - "Mechanized Death—A Tribute to the Accüsed" EP

This double 7" is packaged nicely with all sorts of ACCÜSED style art and features 16 tracks from 16 bands. It's obvious these bands have done their homework and are destroying their throats. Obviously the originals rawk way harder, but for a measly $5... (HM)
($5 ppd: Transparent c/o Paul Holstein, 6759 Transparent Dr, Clarkston, MI 48346, www.transparentrecords.com)





V/A - 'These Things Happen Vol. 1" CD

A new label with the obligatory comp. Includes the likes of TRAVIS CUT, SOUTHPAW, THE SCARIES, ANNALISE and other UK and US bands. Good line-up for starters. (RL)
(Milliepeed, milliepeedrecords@hotmail.com)

V/A - "Tutti Pazzi, Vol. 1" LP

Interesting comp of bands out of what was Yugoslavia. Out of the four, I have heard of PATARENI and DISTRESS, the former having a number of records out showcasing their crazed hardcore (in fact this record was released to celebrate their 19 years of existence). The rest of the bands (ODPADKI CIVILIZACIJE and STRES DRZAVNEGA APARATA) play pretty bog standard messy punk which leaves me a little cold. I'm not sure when this stuff was recorded, although I know some is from the early 90s or even earlier. It is interesting as a historical document of a truely DIY underground punk scene in a country ravaged (and later destroyed) by political unrest. (TB)
(ARA)

V/A - "Tutti Pazzi, Vol. 2" LP

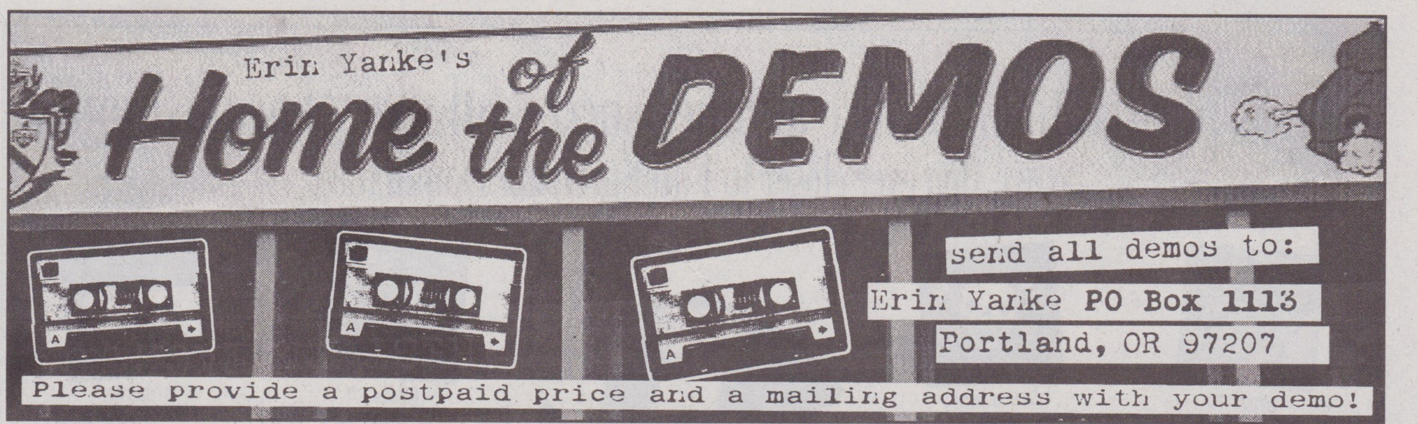
Hands down, this has been my favorite record to review this month. Old Yugoslavian hardcore bands get the super-limited release treatment to celebrate the 19th anniversary of PATARENI—and if I'm reading this right there were only 45 copies of this record made, 200 of *Vol. 1*, and it's on some amazingly thick green vinyl. Fuck, it rules! Four bands, including the aforementioned PATARENI (to me hears sounding very much akin to the UK anarcho bands of the mid 80s), share this disc made up of mostly demo material, and the sound quality is pretty great given that they originally came from cassettes. U.B.R. (fast hardcore devastation with vocals straight out of FEAR OF GOD), III KATAGORIJA (jangly chorded angular hardcore that sounds fairly influenced by the early 80s Italian hardcore scene—think CCM or JUGGERNAUT), and GIUSEPPE CARABINO (gruff vocaled hardcore reminding me of a more slower tempoed, catchier SOA.). All are class-act quality groups, too bad they had to make this record so limited as I think that they all deserve to be heard on a wider level. Try and find it if you can. (WM)
(ARA)

V/A - "Two Turds and a Goofball" CD

This is a comp of 25 bands writing their own version of what they think "Two Turds and a Goofball" should sound like. There's only a few punk style tunes, but this is one hilariously bizarre idea after another. Includes versions by ANAL CUNT, HAPPY FLOWERS, SOCKEYE, BIG POO GENERATOR, ONE7NINE5SIX, and COLON THE COB. An idea that should be copied a few times. Simultaneously very fresh, genius, and demented. (HM)
(Hollow Bunny, PO Box 33264, Raleigh, NC 27636, www.hollowbunny.com)

V/A - "Uncontrollable Fatulence—Fat Music, Vol. VI" LP

......good lord, I've never had to review a "mall-punk" record before....listening to this is like watching state-of-the-art cartoons on television......every band is produced so over-the-top that it almost sounds like they all go to the same "glosser" for high quality detailed paint-jobs.....this shit is soooooo radio friendly, it's amazing......total formula-punk for mindless nine-year-olds living only for the next family mall visit.....the future of punk, eh.......no sir kiddies, punk is long dead and gone....this shit confirms it.....there isn't a band on here that's worth the pot I piss in.....and they all sell ridiculous amounts of records......they control everything.....you can't escape all the full color ads......they're everywhere......ALL THEY WANT IS YOUR MONEY!!!!!......fake fucking BULLSHIT!!!!!!.....this weak-ass shit can take all of it's suburban white-boy middle-class chain-wallet tattoo culture and go jump in a lake...... (SW)
(Fat Wreck Chords, PO Box 193690, San Francisco, CA 94119-3690, www.fatwreck.com)



This month we have to start off with a little story...you see, if you send the demos to San Francisco, they will sit in a box. Once the box gets full, it gets mailed to Portland, where it probably sits at my post office for a week, then it comes to my house. I admit, I review the demos that get sent straight to me before I try and conquer the box. Let's just say there are lots of factors that will make your demo review much later than you'd like, and then there's the whole "going to press time." So anyway, have patience, follow the directions, and always appreciate the mail people at *Maximum*. Also, much thanks to Paul Curran for new adjectives.

ARGIES is not exactly a demo, but a tape re-release of songs from 3 previous albums and one unreleased song from 1985. But it's fucking great, catchy and anthemic, melodic and powerful. They are from Argentina, and claim to be very CLASH influenced, but they live up to the expectations I have about what that means; vocally, especially. I love this. (15 song cassette, lyrics included. Apartado Postal 1879, 64000 Monterrey, Mexico.)

BLASTMAT play straightforward full-on angry punk rock, a little faster than the norm. There are no frills here, but who needs 'em? The vocals have got a sing songy quality to the shouting. (10 song CD, no lyrics included. PO Box 380152, East Hartford, CT 06138-0152.)

BULLET OF DIPLOMACY is mostly a mid-tempo melodic band with a guitar that's lead and solo-oriented, trading off with the vocals for prominence in the songs. The vocals sound like Rob Wright of NO MEANS NO when he sings. This is more singing-style than that, holding out notes all over the place. The tone, though, is remarkably similar. It's polished, but that just means you can hear all the things they are putting into each song. Good work. ($2 US, 1 pound in the UK. 7 song CD, lyrics included. 86 Kelsey Lane, Baisall Common, Coventry, CV7 7GT, UK.)

BURIAL surprised me first with the vocals, which sure didn't sound how I expected Lydia to sound, throaty-screaming atonal and evil...with higher throaty backups and other growling occasionally. Musically they're all about the dark hardcore: guitar driven and middle ground fast, with slow parts that are metallic. (5 song cassette, lyrics included. 2336 N. Killingsworth, Portland, OR 97217.)

DISSYSTEMA did not surprise us. They play discore, with shared vocals: one guy shouting his heart out, and the other guy screaming his heart out. It's pretty solid. The one thing that you can't fuck around with, in my opinion, with this style, is the beat, and this drummer has got it down and hits like a motherfucker. They also do a DOOM cover. (5 song cassette, lyrics included. 303 New Jersey Rd., Brooklawn, NJ 08030.)

DONKEY PUNCH sent a note saying they were looking for bands for a comp, hardcore punk, scum punk, and extreme. I think that's funny because the mix of those styles is what they sound like. The rhythm section is keeping it all together like hardcore, they've got real rockin moments like some scum punk, and the vocals are pretty extreme. ($4 ppd. 7 song CD, no lyrics included. 67 Quebec St. Portland, ME 04101.)

THE ELECTRIC TEASER are a straightforward rockaroll band, mid-tempo and no frills. They've got the sort of singer that has the snotty part of the vocals come out at the end of the line, but he mixes it up a bit. They sound like a good party band. ($3. 3 song CD, no lyrics included. 3685 South Broadway, Apt. A, St. Louis, MO 63118.)

FAILING WINTER has an art rock quirkiness to the mostly straightforward indie rock goings on. The songs are slowish, and the vocals are on the moany side of singing. ($3 ppd. 5 song CD, no lyrics included. 5218 Boston Harbor Rd. NE, Olympia, WA 98506.)

FOURTEEN OR FIGHT is ass-kicking hardcore that's grown from punk roots, not metal hybrid hardcore. Fast and solid musically, with a great balance of instrumentation, they've also got a good singer who's got the guttural puke screams to punctuate his ranting yelling style.($3 ppd. or free on the interweb at fourteenorfight.com. 7 song CD, lyrics included. 281 Whitewood Dr., Streamwood, IL 60107.)

HEARTFIELD epitomizes the qualities of awesome Italian hardcore...tough but not thuggy, they're fast and catchy, in the spine-building, hard-rocking, helping-you-face-the-world way that real hardcore makes you feel. I'm pretty swept away. This is so fucking great, so great. (9 song CD, lyrics included, in Italian. Via Principe Amedep, 347, 70123, Bari, Italy.)

I AM I are sonically together, with a sound like what would have been called hardcore in the early 80s. Catchy, changing tempos and shouted vocals and backups, guitar driven and tight and solid drumming. Occasionally they go goofy, and throw in a funk riff, but that's a pretty "back in the day" trait, too. They pay for postage so there's really no reason to skip this. (Free! 13 song CD, no lyrics included. 504 Neely Farm Dr., Simpsonville, SC 29680.)

INERTIE sound like the TRAGEDY of France. Maybe that's presumptuous, but they've got all the parts, except these guys are a bit more gloomy. The vocals sound like one guy though, and are from way down low in the diaphragm...or the fourth ring of hell. Great production, too. ($4 ppd. 5 song CD, lyrics included. 5 Rue Des Augustins, 33000 Bordeaux, France.)

LEBENDEN TOTEN. Paul says that only the good production makes the music sound different than old Finnish and Italian hardcore...basic drums and bass with fucked up guitar over it. Lady C's vocals are pure venom, sort of shouted groaning style. A definite keeper. If only they'd play more often... ($3 ppd. 8 song cassette, lyrics included. PO Box 40113, Portland, OR 97240.)

MINUTEMEN WROTE PROPAGANDA SONGS is a heartfelt comp of "19 bands destroying MINUTEMEN music." It's so fucking cool to hear bands bring of themselves to a cover project, instead of just doing a straight cover that is obscure and proves some sort of coolness if the audience "gets it." Is that my own problem sneaking into the column? Sorry. If you don't know the MINUTEMEN, don't start here, but now I really want to hear the work of LAST SPACE WITH INTROSPECTOR, PIN PIN SUGAR, SITUATION 3, OTAKU, and GANGWAY, MAN. (19 song CD, lyric booklet. Via Principe Amedep, 347, 70123, Bari, Italy.)

Hell Razor Records released a 4-band demo. **PERDITION** sound like the first wave of the political English bands, which makes sense since this demo was originally released in 1983. The **SKUNKS** are amazingly catchy, and wrote the most poppy song about rioting I've ever heard. **FESTERED VESTOONS** have vocal and structural similarities to the DESCENDENTS, but more political. **SEPTIC SAWBLADES** are the fastest band on here, mid-80s hardcore tempo, with a buzzy guitar sound and vocals pretty far up front. All these bands are great, and I'm stoked to hear them. I'm already taping this for one of my roommates. (5 Euros, dollars, or pounds. Unit 1, 833 Marion Road, Mitchell Park, South Australia, 5043, Australia.)

SATANIC FREEDOM sound like a ratio of one-third DC Hardcore in the youthful crazy times to two-thirds in the emo times. The emo pace is more prominent, but when these guys bust out there's no stopping them. Then there's a smidgen of the traditional Italian punk, too, for example the fancy guitar work. I'm really into this tape. (2 Euros ppd. 8 song cassette, no lyrics included. Via Principe Amedep, 347, 70123, Bari, Italy.)

SELERY play mid-tempo poppy but raw and unpolished punk rock. The vocals are more croony, but occasionally a crusty screamer guy shows up in the back-ups. Reminiscent of the ADVERSIVES in their early years. ($4 ppd. 6 song CD, lyrics included. 2152 Baker W, 129 W. 12th Ave, Columbus, OH 43210.)

We've got a split demo between **SERES HUMANOS** and **KONTRAATTAQUE.** SERES HUMANOS play fast and thick straightforward hardcore, and even when they slow it down it's really powerful. They have dual male and female vocals that are aggro and passionate. KONTRAATTAQUE play in the vein of blazing modern metal-influenced hardcore, with guttural spitting vocals, shared between 2 guys, I think, that fluctuate between real deep and super screamy. Totally solid and awesome tape, highly recommended. ($3 ppd. in North America, $4 Latin America and overseas surface, and $5 overseas air. There are 10 songs on the SERES HUMANOS side, and 6 on the KONTRAATTAQUE side, and lyrics are included. PO Box 39432, Downey, CA 90239.)

STREET FIGHTING YEARS is a 14-band comp, with primarily bands from the North East of the US and a handful from Canada. I think all the bands are straight edge, or at least the ones that aren't still have that sound...the midtempo hardcore with metal moments in the guitars and the mix of emo and angry vocals. There's a tough guy feeling to it, lots of talk about self reliance and lots of revelations. It features THE COMEBACK KID, MY REVENGE, NOT A CHANCE, REALITY'S END, MANDOWN, BREAK IT UP, BOTTOM X LINE, THE FREAKOUT, DEAD WRONG, FVK, THROUGH THICK AND THIN, STAND STRONG, and last but not least, BLUE MONDAY. ($5 or 5 Euros. 28 song cassette, lyric booklet included. De Kottergoren 22, 7683 CA Den Ham (DV.), the Netherlands.)

T.V. CASUAL TEE'S lack the wildness that I'm used to coming from Tennessee, but they've got the heart. They also have a split personality. One face they show is full of simple pop sensibilities, mid tempo at the fastest, and a real singing singer. Then who knows what happens, but the metal kicks in, and its more drony and evil, with a yeller guy up front. (6 song cassette, no lyrics included. PO Box 2323, 502 East Lamar Alexander Pkg., Maryville, TN 37804)

UNTIDY BARGAIN play a sort of lurching guitar driven metal style with a drony industrial quality, but sometimes they pick up the pace, to a catchy straight forward punk song pace. The vocals are up front, with a spoken/sung combo to them, mostly there's 2 guys singing at once, which makes it thicker, but not harmonious. Interesting and stands out. (9 song CD, no lyrics included. PO Box 861343, Tuscaloosa, AL 35486-0012.)

ZOMBIE SHARKS sound like the early days footage of the RAMONES that you see in punk documentaries, but if Tommy only played a 2/4 beat (seek out a drummer to find out what that means). The vocals are more snotty and way up front in the mix. They sound fun! ($3 ppd., everywhere. 11 song CD, no lyrics included. PO Box 32, Moscow, Russia 129090.)

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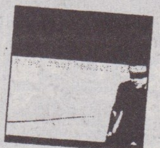

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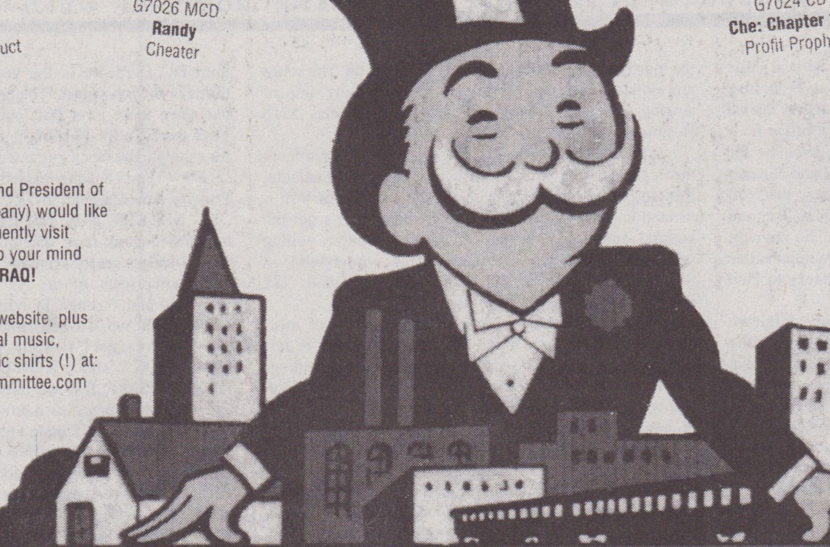

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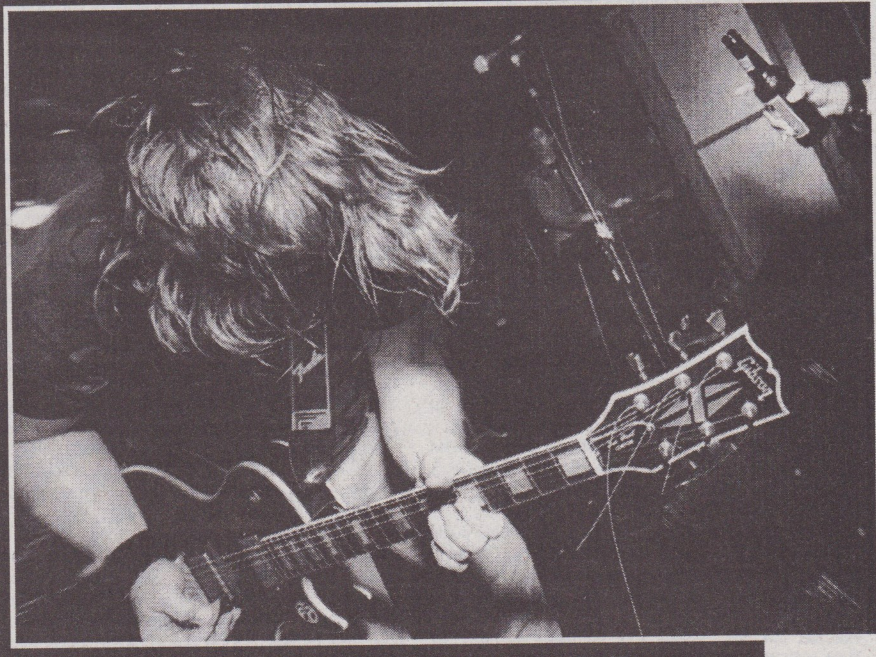

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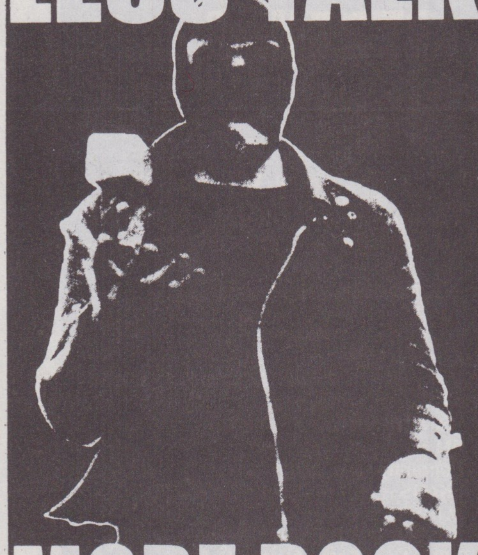

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ZINES

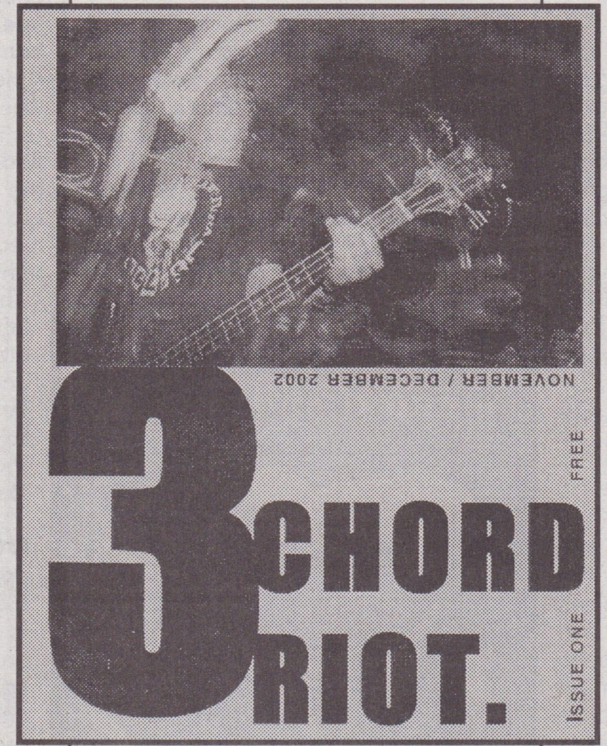
Reviews by: (AC) Arwen Curry, (AR) Aragorn, (JB) Julia Booze, (CB) Chanel Bowman, (BD) Ben Ditch, (MD) Mikel Delgado, (SD) Sara Double-Ears, (KE) Kara Electric, (GF) Gardner Fusuhara, (JH) Jeff Heermann, (HH) Harald Hartmann, (CJ) Chloe Jensen, (JM) Jeff Mason, (JL) Jennifer L. Mushnick, (MN) Mimi Nguyen, (CR) Casey Ress, (MT) Mike Thorn, (GZ) Gordon Zola.

Please send your zine in for review. Write down any information you want included in the review; method of printing, number of pages, issue number and post paid price. If you want us to include a foreign post paid price, tell us. If you accept trades, tell us. The only information we will include is what you provide us.

3 CHORD RIOT #1 / 1 stamp
8.5 x 11 - copied - 4 pgs.
Four pages this time around, and one of them is the cover... *Three-Chord Riot* is the giveaway zine produced by *MRR* alumnus/hardcore maven Matt Average, and serves to bridge the gap between issues of his big, full-sized mag *Engine*. For what it's worth (the price of a postage stamp), *Three-Chord Riot* crams a lot of information into very little space: an impassioned editorial rant on the State of the Punk Nation, some record reviews of up-and-coming hardcore acts, and a selection of the man's profesh-lookin' band photography. The neon-pink stock makes it virtually impossible to ignore. (JH)
PO Box 64666 / Los Angeles, CA 90064
troischordriot@yahoo.com

AMERICANT #4 / $2
5.5 x 8.5 - copied - 40 pgs
The challenge of personal zines is to make the daily events of your life seem interesting to the outside world. *Americant* manages to do this, with stories about the highs and lows of being in bands, reactions to "9/11" and the escapades of sharing a house with Avail. There's also a pretty funny comic of the Dukes of Hazzard killing the Strokes, and an interview that serves as an ode to Converse sneakers. This is light-hearted, but an entertaining read. (Hi Seth!) (MD)
Seth Emily / 4257 N Ashland #1 / Chicago, IL 60613
americant@peoplepc.com

AVOW #13 / $2
5.25 x 8.5 - copied - 36 pgs
The graphic aesthetic of *Avow* merges equal parts Aaron Cometbus and Alison Mosshart (former Discount muse)—artful cut and paste, loose (but structured) line drawings, and lots of copier action with clipped photographs and Letraset. This is not a bad thing, because it is both beautiful and a visual clue to the contents of the



fanzine itself. This is the alphabetical issue, featuring a different thought or tale for each letter. These are personal moments of introspection tending toward the bittersweet, melancholic, and cynical. Overall, the fanzine is a well-written example of this genre, but because the genre is so saturated and so familiar, nothing here sticks out as exemplary or extraordinary. However, for an introduction to this genre you can't go wrong. (MN)
Keith Rosson / 2410 SE Taylor / Portland, OR 97214

BEOGRADE DOBRO JUTRO #4 / $5
8.5 x 11 - printed - 32 pgs - Serbo-Croation
Great new zine out of Belgrade, Serbia; proof even a good old-fashioned American bombing can't kill punk, or rock and roll. So fuck off military everywhere! There are interviews with Retaliator, Vanilla Muffins, No Choice, Batmobile, Threats, Captain Oi Records, Grandpa Candys, and Pet Nihil. The zine also includes ads and record reviews, plus a CD sampler of local Yugoslavian hardcore and oi bands. I sure hope to see future copies of this zine. Definitely a good read! (HH)
Predrag Popovic / Maksima Gorkog 11 / 11000 Beograd Yugoslavia
dread@sezampro.yu

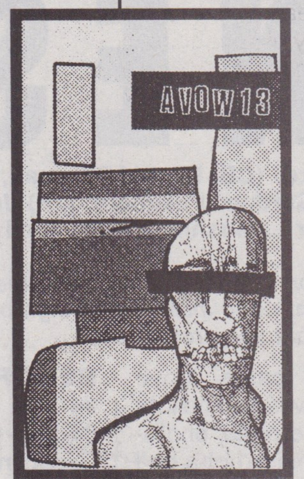
CHINMUSIC #5 / $4
8.5 x 11 - printed - 60 pgs
These are dark days indeed. Not Lil' Bush's promise to use nuclear warfare in Iraq, not spiraling unemployment, not even the sad state of punk decay, but rather these are dark days because until March, there is no baseball. To help you through these difficult times, while you desperately scour the sports page for any free agent signings or blockbuster trades, there is *Chinmusic*, the delightful punk baseball zine. This issue contains interviews with Billy Beane and Johnny Ramone, Mike Piazza, and Barry Zito, Suicide, a great article about Bill Veeck and Eddie Gaedel, plus reviews and other odds and ends. I won't use a baseball cliché to describe how much I enjoy this zine. It's just fucking great. (CR)
PO Box 225029 / San Francisco, CA 94122

CLASS WAR #84 / $?
8.5 x 11 - printed - 16 pgs
Oh *Class War,* "Working Class and Proud," the grandaddy of anarcho bash-and-trash tabloids. *CW* manages a sense of humor that most of the American imitators lack, never forgetting that it's a tabloid as well as a working class anarchist organizing tool. This issue has a big article explaining what to expect from prison when the "ever-encroaching police state" comes for you, and lots of news tidbits from England and the world. (GZ)
PO Box 6 / Crigglestone, Wakefield WF4 3WX / UK
Classwaruk@hotmail.com

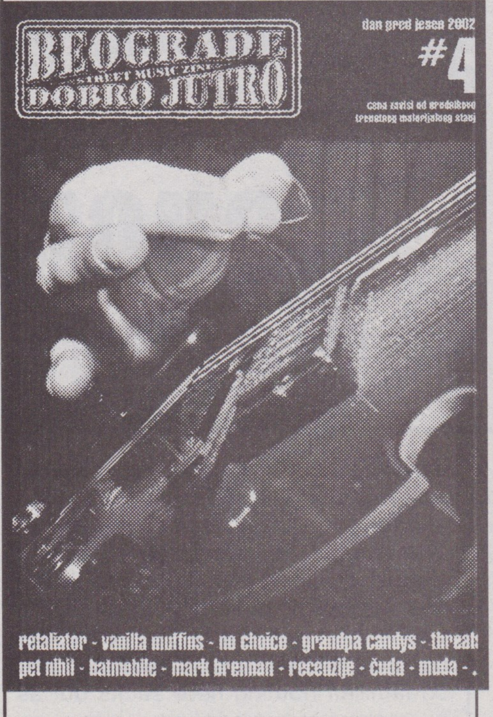
COMETBUS #49 / $2.50 ppd
5.5 x 8.5 - printed - 84 pgs
Well...this almost didn't make it into our review pile, due to it exceeding the poetry limit for punk zines. That aside, what is left to say about *Cometbus* that hasn't been said before? Overall, it's enjoyable, and it's a nice change of pace to get a wide range of contributors—some good, some bad. I'd skip the poetry, but the interviews with Eric Zo and Pat Wright are cool, and the other bits cover the usual *Cometbus* subjects...coffee, relationships, work, and hanging out. (MD)
BBT / PO Box 4279 / Berkeley, CA 94704

CRUSHER #4 / free?
8.5 x 11 - copied - 24 pgs
I should have known what this zine was gonna be like when I saw the cover, featuring a drawing of a topless woman wearing a cowboy hat and holding a gun. This is what happens when a bunch of bro's from Texas get drunk and interview their favorite Confederacy of Scum bands (Cocknoose, Rancid Vat, and more). If you like dudes who say "fag" and "bitch" a whole lot, then this zine is right up your alley. Otherwise, don't waste your time. (CJ)
no address

DEADBEAT #5 / 60¢ postage or trade
5.5 x 8.5 - copied - 40 pgs
An aggro freebie from Florida: I think this is the second issue in two months, meaning that they're more productive than the law requires. Along with the scrawled punk rock mohican cartoons (a fanzine staple since the early 1980s), you got features about long-standing stalwarts the MC5, Teengenerate, the Dead Kennedys and a current metal-noise act done up in the most absurd Marilyn Manson get-ups imaginable. Plenty of rich content, and lots to read and digest. It's free, as the saying goes, so you really can't complain. (JH)
Mike Sokoloff / PO Box 460106
Ft Lauderdale, FL 33346-0106
deadbeatmagazine@yahoo.com



DEATH SHIP #2 / free or donation
8.5 x 14 - printed - 44 pgs
A fanzine for free speech fundamentalists and anti-tech Luddites, *Death Ship* is an oddly formal exercise. Barring the interview with Fred Woodward from *The Match!*, the bulk of the fanzine is divided between staid fanzine reviews and editor Violet Jones' responses to readers' letters, which veer toward miniature lectures on the seemingly immeasurable evils of ISBN numbers and the Internet. Violet is thorough, if dogmatic (and way, way repetitive). For instance, a thoughtful *Broken Pencil* review of his fanzine is reprinted in its entirety. The reviewer voices some legitimate criticisms of the writing style ("workmanlike and unexpressive") and the limitations of the fanzine's exclusive focus on the ISBN number (which does amount to an obsession in this issue) as the sign of overarching governmental control. In response, Violet simply points out that *Broken Pencil* is funded by various Canadian arts councils and accepts advertising, as if this were adequate evidence to dismiss the content of the review itself. This is typical of the fanzine's approach—passionate and driven, doctrinaire and dismissive. I imagine arguing with Violet would be similar to engaging a sectarian Marxist newspaper pusher, involving an unsatisfying expenditure of energy and no real dialogue. Of course, the notion that freedom of speech is a universal bedrock of human rights is actually very American. When the United Nations was working out its human rights charter in the 1950s, the Western nations (led by the United States) argued for the abstract rights of free speech, etc., while the poorer nations and former colonies argued that basic human rights were more material in nature (the right to food, shelter, rights of labor, etc.). I'm not arguing an either/or choice here, only that the political and ideological scope of this fanzine's mission is really, really limited. (MN)
Violet Jones / PO Box 55336
Hayward, CA 94545



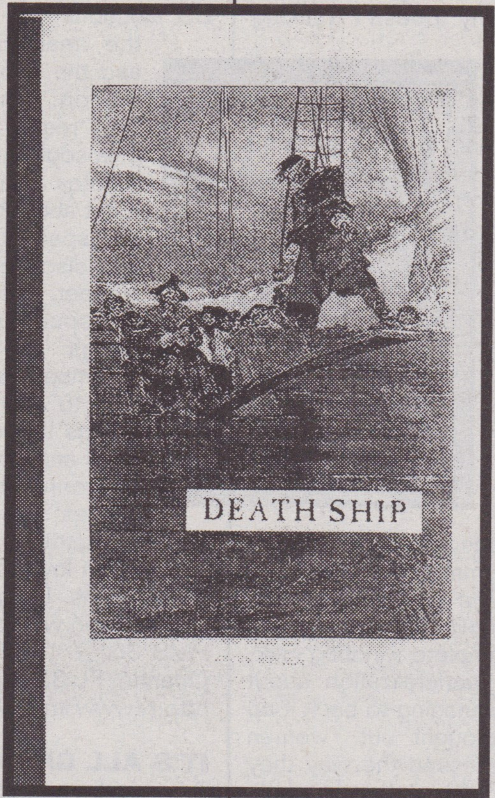
DON'T HAVE A COW #1 / $3 ppd
5.5 x 8.5 - copied - 68 pgs
Is it me, or is it nice to see vegetarianism and veganism addressed again? It seemed like ten years ago, animal rights were all the rage in the punk scene, so to speak. Maybe the vegan fascists scared everyone away, and factory farming is still going strong—so it seems this is needed more than ever. As a veg, and someone who likes to cook, it was nice to see a zine addressing the ethics and realities of veganism, as well as encouraging some creativity in the kitchen. This cookbook has tons of delicious sounding recipes, plus space to write in your own notes (because half the fun of cooking is adding your own personal touch), cooking tips, reviews of meat and dairy substitutes, and of course, plen-

ty of reasons to stop eating meat. (MD)
John Johnson / PO Box 8145 / Reno, NV 89507

EAST VILLAGE INKY #16 / $2
4.25 x 5.5 - copied - 40 pgs
You know, it's a quarterly zine with a DIY slant (cause what's more DIY than fucking having kids?) that mixes recipes, restaurant reviews, and funny stories about parenting and life in New York. A fast read and totally engaging, but kinda in that trashy magazine way where it's full of stuff that doesn't necessarily pertain to your life. I mean I like kids, hell I just hung out with my friend Stephanie's newborn for two hours today (ten lbs. in the crook of your arm is damn heavy!). This issue is mostly about Ayun's adventures with her husband Greg who just won a Tony for a play he wrote, plus crafts and cooking with the kids. (SD)
Ayun Halliday / PO Box 22754 Brooklyn NY 11202
inky@erols.com

EAST VILLAGE INKY #17 / $2
5.5 x 4.25 - copied - 42 pgs
Ayun is back with more stories of five-year-old Inky and two-year-old Milo. The theme is ecology. She tackles the moral dilemma of eating meat vs having no time to cook flavorless veggie versions, dresses the kids in some classy Halloween costumes created out of actual trash (thanks to the city of New York deciding that glass and plastic no longer count as recyclable), and attempts driving in the city. These stories often diverge into anecdotes from the childless years and are always accompanied by illustrations. Less cavorting in the city and more playing on Cape Cod for the summer this time around. (SD)
Ayun Halliday / PO Box 22754 / Brooklyn NY 11202
inky@erols.com

(EM)ZINE #15 / $2
6 x 6 - copied - 47 pgs
Bike issue!!! There is advice for riding in all seasons, interviews with The November Group, Vanilla Bicycles, The Bicycle Transportation Alliance and Bicycle the band. (Bicycle the band rides bikes from show to show, across the country!) Reviews of skateparks in the NW and some records. *(EM)* is a smaller size now, and ad-free. Looks real classy but consistently spells "business," "buisness." Is that commentary from the anti-corporate attitudes reflected in this zine? I hope so. Lots of good reading! (JB)
PO Box 14728 / Portland, OR 97293-0728
jered@em-zine.com



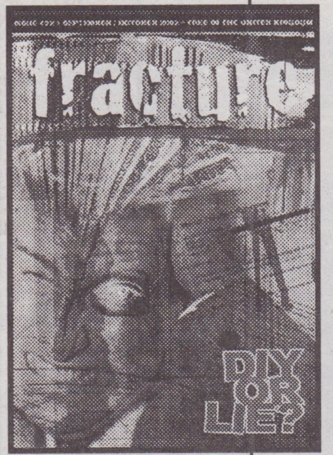
EVERYTHING FALLS APART
#1 / 50p (SAE overseas)
5.5 x 8.5 - copied - 32 pgs
At the age of 27, editor Will got into punk rock (a savior from his mundane wage-slave job) later in life. His overuse of the word "ace" and phonetic spelling of British pronunciation is coupled with an enthusiastic tone pervasive in every aspect (and it has all of the usual stuff) of this fledgling music zine. How can something so positive be bad? Stale email interviews with bands like Jets vs Sharks and Tempting Kate and undistinguishable photos of Hot Water Music and Milloy, that's how. However, the sentiment is so genuine, with typos and entire phrases missing due to what I imagine is a fast paced fervor while writing, that I found myself drawn to listen to that Leatherface/Hot Water Music split that he raves about. (SD)
Will Falls Apart / PO Box 215
Leeds / UK / LS26 OWP

FRACTURE #22 / $3 world or 54 pence SAE in the UK
8.5 x 11 - printed - 116 pgs
As always, *Fracture* is fucking huge, and fucking free in the UK. There are plenty of reviews and ads, and interviews (mostly pretty good) with bands I don't care for--Academy Morticians, the Pavers, Q and Not U and reformed tossers Dag Nasty. This issue's theme is DIY vs. commercial labels, and a wide variety of punkers weigh in with their opinions. The experience and quantity of the contributors makes this an outstanding issue in my mind. The glossy cover and the layout look great. (JM)
Unit 100 / 61 Wellfield Rd / Cardiff / CF24 3DG / UK
fracturezine@hotmail.com

FREE SOCIETY #13 / $3 ppd US or Canada, contact for international price
5.5 x 8.5 - copied - 74 pgs w/ CDR
The highlights are the local news and the pamphlet reprinted from the internet. There are a number of local stories here I would not have heard about otherwise, and the critique of the G8 is actually footnoted, a welcome change. The rest is mundane stories about shows, driving around, etc.; interviews with Submission Hold (all right) and 401, whose demo CD is

included with this issue (pointless); and a few reviews. Unless you are desperate for an update on the political scene in Peterborough, your $3 will be better spent elsewhere. (JM)
Stuart Morris / 148 London St
Peterborough, ON / K9H 2Y5
Canada
freesociety@hotmail.com

THE INNER SWINE vol. 8 #3 / $2
5.5 x 8.5 - copied - 60 pgs
Nope, Somers ain't kidding with that title. Promise. Lots of rants this issue, proving that irony doesn't fucking exist anymore. I don't know if I should laugh or cry. OK, laugh: In the "ridiculous buffoonery" portion, Somers breaks down the three kinds of writers there are, in a response to people asking "how do you write?" His answer is witty and intelligent and manages to come off uncondescending. But then I cry: In his "commentary" portion, *Making Fun of The Weaker Sex: The Things Women Own*, Jeff proves that he is in fact a complete windbag making a sweeping generalization about high heels and managing to back it up with a poorly thought out "women aren't being oppressed the way they once were" line of crap that has little to do with anything he says about stupid shoes. Don't worry, I didn't really cry. (JB)
PO Box 3024 / Hoboken, NJ 07030
www.innerswine.com

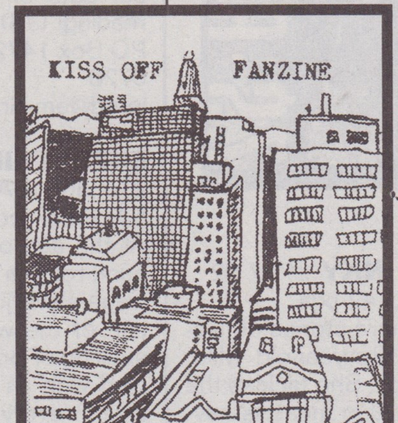


THE IRRATIONAL SMECHT #2
8 x 8 - copied - 16 pgs - Dutch/English
This is one of those zines that goes into my art collection. Most collage zines now days seem to have no bite, this one does big time. The collages usually have sharp contrasts such as Hitler standing in a children's party, with a cat and an explanation of his softer emotions. There are lots of references to suicide usually surrounded by sexual imagery. There are some absurdist writings usually in the form of cut out newspaper clippings. Hey, the cut out heads are creative especially if the reader sticks their head in with a photo of Dubya. I liked it, thanks! (HH)
Yvonne Vorhoy / BP 477 / Harlem
Netherlands

IMPACT PRESS #41 - $2
8.5 x 11 - printed - 62 pgs
Oh, *Impact Press*. This independent publication hailing from the wilds of Orlando, Florida, continues to beat the drum of mediocre liberal politics. Featuring articles about the privatization of public schools, the US elections, the limitations of the mainstream media, and the benefits of cooperation, this magazine tries really, really hard. A philosophy professor contributes an academic argument about our "presumptive species identity" and spiritual disconnection that's a real sleeper, besides being politically spurious. Among other things, he argues that the absence of a reciprocal relationship to animals has led human beings to lose their moral compass and potential for empathy. Restoring that relationship, he implies, will transform the political and spiritual landscape. What? People can love their animals and still be assholes. For proof, I could show you a vegan warrior or two. (MN)
PMB 361 / 10151 University Blvd /
Orlando, FL 32817
http://www.impactpress.com

IT'S ALL GRAVY #1 / $1
8.5 x 4.25 - copied - 24 pgs
This local fanzine by the Charolastra Collective covers the South Central and East Los Angeles punk and ska scenes, and is intended for "kids with ghetto backgrounds who enjoy going to punk/ska shows." Featuring short show reviews, sparse band interviews with local bands and a scene report from the Tijuana projects, this fanzine presents a slapdash design (widely spaced text, handwritten captions) with lots of raw enthusiasm. This format works best as a local networking tool, I think, given the rather lackluster "just the facts" presentation of shows and bands. Also, there's an uncritical mini-essay about Mao, which screams Revolutionary Communist Party in a loud, sectarian voice (complete with Bob Avakian quotes). Ugh, run away, kids! The Cultural Revolution was most definitely *not* the pinnacle of liberation movements! (MN)
gravyzine@hotmail.com

KISS OFF #8 / $2
5.5 x 8.5 - copied - 38 pgs
I like these zines that give life to cities, zines that are locale oriented. In ways like giving mention to streets and people by name and using dialogue, editor Chris Kiss creates a smooth picture of Ottawa, Canada. Through his short anecdotes, arranged in somewhat linear chapters the constant topics of poverty, love, friendship, and stagnancy are explored. Chris relies heavily on the romanticism of the plight of the downtrodden punk rocker who in turn relies on the crutch of cigarettes and alcohol. (SD)
Chris Kiss / 7-306 Frank St / Ottawa
Ontario / K2P OX8 / Canada



KWEER CORPS INTERNATIONAL #2 / $2
8.5 x 11 - copied - 21 pgs
Themed zines can be trite and boring, but I found that this one actually interested me. The essays, interview, old fliers, and record and show reviews are all centered around the queer punk scene and being a queer punk. It's consistently well-written and insightful too, which is pretty rare these days. They're looking to make the zine

more of a global queer resource and are looking for contributions, so if you've got anything, send it! (CJ)
Hank / PO Box 3411 / Tallahassee, FL 32315-3411
queersfightharder@yahoo.com

LARCENY #16 / $1 ppd or trade
5.5 x 8.5 - copied - 40 pgs
If someone blabbed at you about their life for half an hour, and you wrote it all down, you would end up with something like this zine. It's a rambling, ongoing tangent about the editor's life...deciding to be straightedge, getting married, anarchism and politics, friends, exes...it wasn't exactly captivating, and the dull layout didn't help. I liked the story of re-visiting old records in the collection and realizing that they suck. I'd say this is okay, especially if your a fan of the personal, verging on emo zines. (MD)
Shaun / 8128 Constitution Apt 8 / Sterling Heights, MI 48313-3847
evartcore@netscape.net

LITTLE BLACK STAR # 22 / 1 stamp
5.25 x 8.5 - copied - 4 pgs
This biweekly anarchist mini-newsletter is probably a ground-shaking publication in Lewisburg, Pennsylvania, if Frank from this season's *Real World Las Vegas* is any indication of the locals. In that sense, the cynical, seething essay about Radio Sawa (the US-run "rah rah" radio station for the Middle East) and the continuing list of Bush's various offenses to democratic process, environmental protection, et cetera, must constitute a welcome voice in the wilderness. There's nothing new here for those of us who are, say, zine reviewers at a metropolitan-based punk rock magazine, but this is clearly a publication not meant for us. The politics are standard anarchist fare, including the depressing "don't vote" editorial arguing that voting never changed anything. I don't know how anyone can make this argument in the Bush era, or in states where anti-immigrant initiatives (for instance) have mobilized right-wing voters *en masse*. The political purism is stale; this whole "it only encourages them" line seems to be recited by rote rather produced from critical reflection. But whatever, *Little Black Star* is a cute name. (MN)
Autonomous Arts Collective / POB 197 / Lewisburg, PA 17837

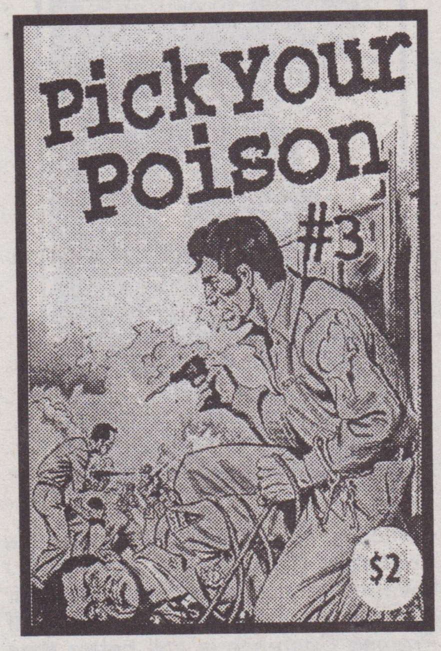
PICK YOUR POISON #3 / $2
5.5 x 8.5 - copied - 64 pgs
The idea behind this issue of *Pick Your Poison* is to pick a word out of the dictionary and write a story about it. Nate admits that he cheated a bit and chose the words he wanted to write about most, but the result is still interesting. Most of the stories are of his past, being a fucked up kid, breaking into houses, getting drunk and high at golf courses, abandoned houses and the other odd hangouts for misanthropes, rejects, and teenagers. His stories are interesting, well written, and told without any sort of manufactured importance. Just to name a few, this issue contains stories about, shitty cars, battery powered cars, Christian colleges, graveyards, and after school jobs. Even though I don't know the guy, his stories held my interest throughout. (CR)
Nate Gangelhoff / PO Box 8995 / Minneapolis, MN 55408

PLASTIC BOMB #41 / $7
11 x 8.5 - printed - 124 pgs - German
As always packed full of stuff to read and buy. This issue's interviews are with the bands; Rawside, Bonehouse, Scrapy, Extrabreit, Avail, Einleben and others. There are also plenty of articles covering such topics as Afghanistan, the scene in Venezuela, SS Ultrabrutal, a great German band from the heyday, and "When punk started." And of course there are lots and lots of reviews of new records, CDs and zines. *Plastic Bomb* is always a fun and informative read and a good way to keep up on punk world wide. Oh yeah, it comes with the usual free sampler featuring those bands covered in the zine. (HH)
Postfach 100205 / 47002 Duisburg Germany / www.plastic-bomb.de

PROFANE EXISTENCE #40 / $1.50 or 4 $.37 stamps N. America, $2 S. America and Europe, $3 world
11 x 17 - printed - 20 pgs
I'm one of those people who gets excited to see a new issue of *Profane Existence*, but while I enjoyed #40 I have to say it is not one of their stronger efforts. But a weak issue of *Profane Existence* is still better than many other anarcho-tabloids. It feels a little rushed, with a lot of content I've seen in other zines already (like the rants of Jacob David of Eureka, CA and some of the Emo Wuss's many pages), but it is free and there's plenty of good stuff to be had. Professor Havoc documents the origin and rise of crust in the UK and Adrienne Droogas writes on a religious psychopath, W. David Hager, and attempts to place him in the federal government in a position of power over reproductive health. Also you get protest and ecology news, reviews and ads, a rant against Christmas (hear! hear!), the tale of Dan's vida loca, and a cover suitable for framing. (JM)
PO Box 8722 / Minneapolis, MN 55408
www.profaneexistence.com

PUNK SHOCKER #10 / $1?
5.5 x 8.5 - copied - 31 pgs
This is a music zine from England with a whole bunch of reviews, a long interview with Angelic Upstarts, and a brief history and discography of The Germs. On the front cover it says that there is "a whole lot more besides," but there really isn't. (BD)
PO Box 1.T.A / Newcastle Upon Tyne NE99 1TA / England

RADICAL SLUT DISCOVERY
#1 / $2
7.5 x 8.5 - copied - 56 pgs
Subtitled "building and rebuilding our sexual selves," this thick fanzine performs a dual function as a confessional and a guide. Seeking to address the



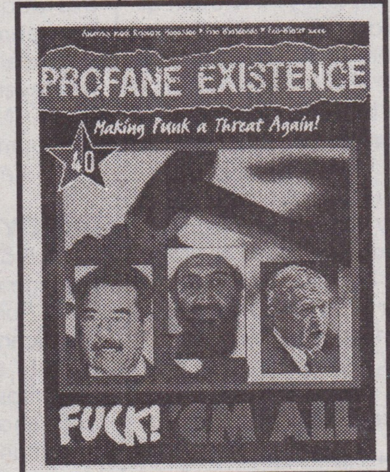
lack of discussion about sexual abuse in pro-sex and ployamorous discourses, the authors offer a spectrum of personal narratives of sexual abuse and sexual shame and tie these to a larger political project about sexual rights and gender politics. Much of this fanzine is occupied with step-by-step guides to dealing with sexual abuse or inequities in groups or communities. I suppose I should mention that the layout isn't the best ever. The scrawled, handwritten parts could have been condensed if typed, thus saving *a lot* of paper and money for the authors. I think this is an important project, but at the same time I have to admit that I'm worried about the creeping interpenetration of therapeutic discourse in our political lives. I think there are limits to this kind of self-help narrative, which haven't yet been discussed in these projects. (MN)
2866 Wildwood Drive / Clearwater, FL 33761
fecuntah@yahoo.com

RAZORCAKE #11 / $3
8 x 10.5 - printed - 96 pgs
The more I read *Razorcake*, the more I like it... I think it's the columns that do it for me. Some of them are good, others excellent (especially Maddy *Tight Pants*' one about a Ricki Lake experience). In fact, the excellent columns almost make up for the White Stripes interview (ewwww). Interviews with D4, The Jewws, Rolling Blackouts, and Blazing Haley are all well-done and some of them made me laugh (in a good way). You'll also find record reviews, zine reviews, and lots of pretty pictures for those of you who can't read. Cowabunga dude! (CJ)
PO Box 42129 / Los Angeles, CA 90042

REASON TO BELIEVE
#7 / Free in Europe, $1 elsewhere
8.5 x 11 - printed - 70 pgs
Another big issue of this British newsprint mag...free in Europe, a buck if you live elsewhere in the world. This ish is dedicated to prisoners' issues (with articles on Prisoner Support Have Distribution, how to write to a prisoner, etc.), with material regarding DIY resources ("proper breathing techniques done easy", and an article that asks the question "Are Free Zines Killing Small Zines?"), a scene report from Macedonia, political resistance in the South Pacific, interviews with the bands Stand and Crispus Attucks, and the expected roster of reviews and editorials. My hands are covered in ink after having read it, but that's a minor complaint. (JH)
145-149 Cardigan Rd / Leeds LS6 1LJ United Kingdom
info@rtbzine.org

RECLUSE ZINE #7 / $1.25
5.5 x 8.5 - copied - 32 pages
This is your basic music zine. It starts off with the political rants and raves from random writers and goes off into reviews of records and zines. It's somewhat like a *MRR* in a slim 32-page, blue zine. The layout sucks, and made it really boring. Most of the articles were very interesting though. (KE)
PO Box 307663 / Columbus, OH 43230

REMAINS OF A CAVEMAN #2 / **SMALL SAILOR** #10
5.5 x 8.5 - copied - 44 pgs
Another zine from England, this one's a split. *Remains of a Caveman* is a nice mix of personal stories, and observations/opinions about the UK punk scene, and the scene in general.There are interviews with artists Michael Bukowski and The Steak Dept as well as some zine reviews and travel journals. *Small Sailor* has a lot of music reviews and is generally a more interview and review oriented zine, but it does compliment *Remains of a Caveman* quite nicely. Interviews with *Intimidation Records*, *Household Name Records*, and *The Bus Station Loonies* fill up most of the space on this half of the zine, but there is also a little bit of politics, a vegan cheese cake recipe and a couple of more personal stories/accounts. Probably worth reading if you're from England or care about England, but not if you're just English. (BD)



18 Brangwyn Drive / Patcham / Brighton / East Sussex / BN1 8XD / England

SAVAGE AMUSEMENT #18 / $1
8 x 11 - copied - 10 pgs
This zine is printed out like a newspaper. It made this zine a whole bunch more fun to read. It's all the way from England too! I really liked this zine, even though I wasn't too familiar or interested in any of the bands. Their layout was great and everything was put together well. Tons of information on bands and zines, as well as a good amount of reviews. Check it out! (KE)
Trev Howarth / Rosehill / 20 New Front St / Tanfield, Lea, Stanly, Co Durham / DH9 9LY / England
trevhagl@hotmail.com

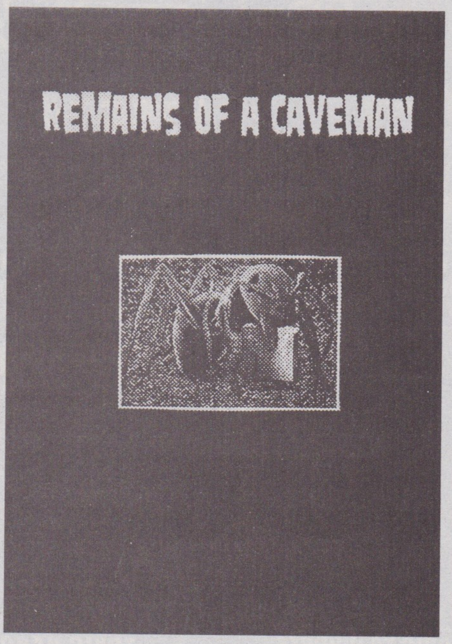
SINK HOLE ZINE #8 / $1
7.5 x 8 - copied - 48 pages
I was really excited to start reading this zine. It looked like it had a lot to offer. I wasn't too thrilled when I started to read it, and then there it was!!!! A five page interview on the Distillers! I swear, if I see one more zine with a Distillers interview in it, I'm going to burn it. Besides the interview, they had a crossword puzzle which made

up for it. It's a completely DIY zine, which is always an A+ in my book. The Distillers aren't DIY, though... (KE)
2105 19th Street West / Brandenton, FL 34205
nobody@sinkholezine.com

SLUG & LETTUCE #73 / 60¢ postage US, $1 Canada and Mexico, $2 world
11 x 15 - printed - 20 pgs
It's true most bands sound alike. Same instruments, same 4/4, same tempo, same lyrical topics, fuckin' same songs almost. But though to the uninitiated they effectively are all the same, to a student of the genre 90% are all right and 10% fucking killer. *Slug & Lettuce* features ads, reviews, columns, photographs and classifieds. It is fucking killer, a bargain at sixty cents, and one of the greatest resources of the DIY punk community. (JM)
c/o Christine / PO Box 26632
Richmond, VA 23261-6632

TOILET PAPER #2 / free?
5.5 x 8.5 - copied - 36 pgs

Probably the most interesting thing in this zine is the several pages of correspondence between the editor, (who has obvious feminist leanings) and some dumb guy who can't seem to grasp the concept of feminism. Just reading how misinformed this guy is made me really mad. Basically he compares feminists to "fascist rape assholes" and seems to be under the impression that being a feminist means that you hate men. C'mon now! There are also interviews with My Fellow Astronauts and The Okimonks, as well as several pages of weird poetry. There's some personal writing, but I found it unclear whether this was fiction or non fiction. My main gripe with *Toilet Paper* is that the layout is really confusing. The introduction is at the end of the zine, and some



of the stories and articles seem to just end with no conclusion, as if pages are missing. (BD)
Alva Dittrich / Joh Kolmann Str 8 / 53913 / Swisttal / Germany

TRUST #97 / $5
11 x 8.5 - printed - 68 pgs - German
"Put on your shitkickers and kick some shit." Actually, I'd rather stay home and read *Trust*. This issue has interviews with Blackheart Procession, Pretty Girls Make Graves, DRI, Nation Blue, Schneider TM, and Vaccination Records. There is. a part three article on the history of skate rock, a punk rock crossword puzzle, lots of record reviews, and the best gig listing anywheres if you're on your way nach Deutschland. Tschuss! (HH)
Postfach 110762 / 28087 Bremen / Germany
www.trust-zine.de

UP MAGAZINE #6 / $7
11 x 8.5 - printed - 52 pgs - Dutch
Lots of punk rock here including interviews with the bands Green Lizard, All Systems Go, Bad Astronaut, Tsunami Bomb, Gaza Strippers, Nashville Pussy, Raised Fist, and plenty more. There are also lots of new record reviews, and lots of colorful ads. I only wish this zine were a bit more raw with less emphasis on the slick Converse-like ads. Oh well! (HH)
Postbus 4269 / 5604 BG Eindhoven / Netherlands
www.upmagazine.nl

WANG DANG SWEET POONTANG #1 / free
Can't complain if it's free, I always say. Wait I never say that. There are interviews with Mr. California and the State Police, Godstomper, Sluggo and Suffer Now/It Will End In Pure Horror. When the editor of a zine includes the quote "tell us a little bit about what each band sounds like?" with the answer "Vaginal bludgeoningcore" without any kind of editor's note saying "damn that was fucked up, but I'm just quoting" one can only assume that he didn't care or even notice that, *that is fucked up!* Anyway, context willing, the band is on Bludgeoncore Records. Who cares. The zine is artful with a nice layout and I am now throwing it away.
(JB)
Jamie MacIntosh / 211 Coventry Crescent / Fredericton, NB / Canada E3B 4P4
jmacintosh53@yahoo.com

XEROGRAPHY DEBT #9 / $3 ($5 world)
5.5 x 8.5 - copied - 72 pgs
Getting bigger and better with every issue, *Xerography Debt* is currently the most timely, and one of the best, review zines out there. Calling itself "The review Zine with Perzine Tendencies," each reviewer (almost all zinester notables themselves) has their own section with their own unique organization and reviewing style. They don't print bad reviews, which to me is half the fun, but *XD* is a great resource. (GZ)
Davida Gypsy Breier / POB 963 / Havre de Grace, MD 21078
davida@leekinginc.com

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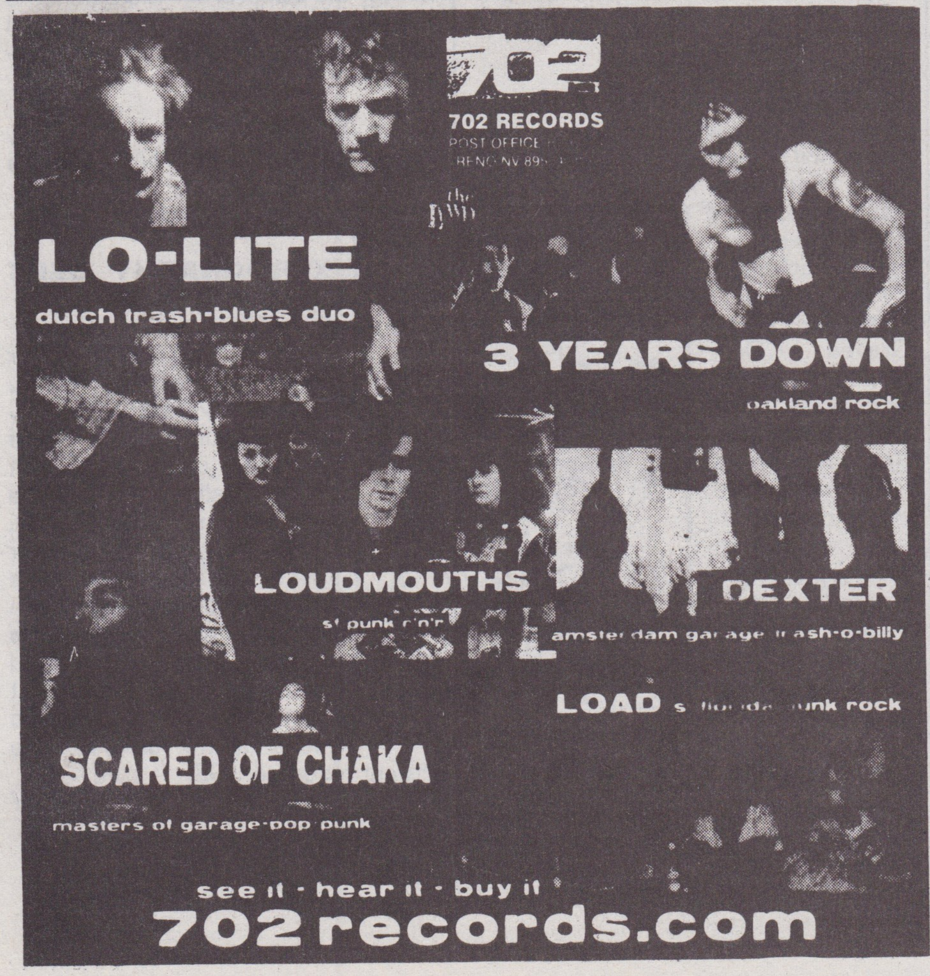

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New Release! **DESTROY** Discography CD Re-release of the Necropolis LP on Sound Pollution with the entire Destroy vinyl output as "bonus tracks." All the 7" and comp tracks. **HC5008**

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CAUSTIC CHRIST S/T Two guys from Aus Rotten, 1 from React and 1 from Submachine combine to create a new hardcore powerhouse. Combining the stylings of early Corrosion of Conformity with faster Swedish hardcore resulting in a manic HC sound. **HC 7028**

RIISTETYT Tervetuola Kuolema One of the great Finnish hardcore bands of the 80s returns. No weak rehash here, full on hard driving Finnish style hardcore that put Tampere on the map! Licensed from Fight Records, remixed with a bonus track! **HC 7027**

IDENTITY PARADE: PHOTOGRAPHS BY KRISTOFER PASANEN, 1995–2000
150 Pages, Black & White, Hardcover Havoc records is proud to present our first effort at publishing. Kristofer Pasanen has compiled an amazing book of his live photographs of bands taken over the last five years. Hundreds of bands are photographed from Crust to SE to Emo; see the website for a complete list. **HC-IDP [BOOK]**

SKITSYSTEM Enkel Resa Till Rännstenen Second LP from the masters of dark Swedish hardcore. Heavy and brutal b-beat mixed with crusty HC and thrash styles. A pulverizing steamroller of Swedish hardcore. Split release with No Tolerance Records of Sweden. **LP HC1205 ☠ CD HC5005**

Now on CD! **NINE SHOCKS TERROR Zen and the Art of Beating Your Ass** The "lost" LP re-issued. This is a totally remastered and remixed second release of the hard to get first LP which came out on Devour Records of Japan in 1999. An over the top wall of thrash. Brutal no-holds-barred sonic assault. This is the most powerful material by the most intense band in hardcore today. CD contains all Nine Shocks' recorded material other than the Paying Ohmage LP. 38 tracks total, including all the 7" and comp tracks. **LP HC1204 ☠ CD HC5009**

MISERY The Early Years Incl. the Born, Fed, Slaughtered, Blindead, and Children of War 7"s, the Misery side of the split LP with SDS, and the Production Through Destruction LP. 71 Minutes of Amebix style apocalyptic crust. Split release with Crimes Against Humanity Records. **CD HC5004**

HOLDING ON Just Another Day LP / CD Crucial hardcore from Minnesota's Holding On! Mixes the crunch of Judge and Chain of Strength with the anger and raw power of Negative Approach. Totally pissed off, raw, powerful Hardcore! Split release with THD, Havoc and 1% records. **LP HC1203 ☠ CD HC5003**

DS•13 Killed by the Kids One of the best bands in hardcore today. Amazing second LP of early 80s-style thrash/ HC/ punk. Excellent production, Pushead cover art. **LP HC1202 ☠ CD HC5002**

VARIOUS ARTISTS When Hell Freezes Over Compilation LP Featuring Code 13, Misery, Dreadnaught, Onward To Mayhem, Arden Chapman, Segue, Feed the Machine, Scorned, Calloused, Fallen Graces, & Pontius Pilate. All new material by 11 Minneapolis punk/ HC bands. Styles vary from street punk, to crust, to grind, but it's all punk and all Minneapolis. Split release between Havoc, Sin Fronteras, and local bands. **HC1201**

CODE 13 Complete Discography 1994–2000 All the 7"s and comp tracks with one unreleased song. **CD HC5001**

ASSEMBLY OF GOD Submission Obedience Denial New band with members of Brother Inferior, Burnpile, and Subsanity. Fast punk/HC a lot like the later Brother Inferior material. **HC7026**

VITAMIN X People that Bleed Third 7" by this Dutch SEHC band. Fast HC sound similar to DS-13 or Life's Halt. Great political SE lyrics and high energy HC. **HC7025**

TEAR IT UP S/T Ex Dead Nation, killer fast hardcore with lots of drive and energy. **HC7024**

DS•13 / CODE 13 13 song split 7" Sweden and Minnesota united in fast, raw hardcore pride. **HC7023**

REAL ENEMY / HOLDING ON Twin Cities Hardcore split 7" Political straight edge and youth crew hardcore. **HC7022.5**

NINE SHOCKS TERROR Mobile Terror Unit 7" EP Awesome raw fast thrash from Cleveland. **HC7022**

KAAOS Nukke Re-issue 1985 Finnish HC, classic stuff. **HC7021**

CLUSTERBOMBUNIT...and the Dirty Little Weapons 7" EP Brutal dis-core from Stuttgart, Germany. **HC7020**

UNITED SUPERVILLAINS (USV) Escapist 7" EP crucial fast HC similar to old Boston bands like DYS, Siege and SSD full speed ahead! **HC7019**

SPAZM 151 S/T 7" EP Second 7" by this Texas HC powerhouse. Hardcore like Black Flag, Poison Idea or Battalion of Saints. **HC7018**

DEMON SYSTEM 13 Aborted Teen Generation 7" EP U.S. press of this amazing Swedish hardcore band, fast aggressive powerful old-school hardcore. **HC7017**

CODE-13 A Part Of America Died Today 7" EP Third and best EP from Minnesota thrash punk defenders of the faith–twelve songs. **HC7016**

TAMPERE SS Kuolutt & Kuopattu 7" EP Demo and comp tracks from this crucial Finnish hardcore band of the early 80s. **HC7015**

TAMPERE SS SS Sotaa 7" EP More incredible Finnish thrash hardcore first released in '83. **HC7014**

NOTA/BROTHER INFERIOR split 7" Tulsa, Oklahoma's best hardcore old and new. **HC7013**

PROTESTI S/T 8 track EP Originally released as a demo in 1983, this is Finnish HC in the classic Propaganda Records style. **HC7012**

HEIST Pain Is Causing Life 7" EP Wicked fast and brutal HC in the Infest tradition. Second EP by this Australian thrash outfit. **HC7011**

DISTRAUGHT S/T 7" EP Brutal heavy hard-core from Brooklyn, NYC. New remixed second press with bonus track. **HC7010**

MURDERERS S/T 7" EP Legendary chaos punk/ HC. Manic HC-punk like Disorder, much more thrash than their recent stuff. **HC7009**

CODE-13 They Made a Wasteland and Called it Peace Furious hardcore punk from beneath the streets of Minneapolis. **HC 7008**

H-100'S Texas Death Match 7" Snotty, harsh, early 80s hardcore with a seriously bad attitude. 3/4 of Nine Shocks Terror. **HC 7007**

MASSKONTROLL Warpath 7" EP Brutal Swedish-style hardcore similar to No Security, Doom, etc. ex-Resist, pre-Detestation. **HC7006**

CODE-13 Doomed Society 7" EP Blistering hardcore punk. Ex-Destroy but more of a punk/HC sound than full-on grind. **HC7005**

BRISTLE System 7" EP Rip roaring old school punk/HC from Seattle, powerful and catchy. **HC7004**

AUSROTTEN Fuck Nazi Sympathy 7" EP All-out punk attack similar to Varukers, Discharge, Conflict.**HC7003**

CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE In a Few Hours of Madness 7" EP Diverse political punk, similar to Conflict at their peak. **HC7002**

DESTROY Burn this Racist System Down 7" EP Raging political hard-core in the vein of Doom, ENT, Disrupt. Our first release, from 1992. **HC 7001**

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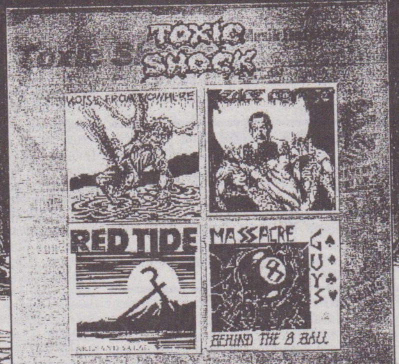

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